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THE AMOURS  
OF THE  
CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS

BY  
JOHN BAPTISTE LOUVET DE COUVRAY

FOUNDED ON HISTORICAL FACTS. INTERSPERSED  
WITH MOST REMARKABLE NARRATIVES

A LITERAL UNEXPURGATED TRANSLATION  
FROM THE PARIS EDITION OF 1821

VOLUME III

WITH NUMEROUS BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVINGS  
ETCHED BY LOUIS MONZIES  
FROM DRAWINGS BY PAUL AVRIL

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M D C C C X C V I I I



SIX WEEKS OF THE LIFE  
OF THE  
CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS.

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O Venus! Venus! it was thy will that, for the amusement of the fair sex, and of my long minority, there should be united in Faublas, at the age of seventeen, many qualities considered as incompatible. With the pretty face of a young girl, thou gavest me the complete vigour of a man; thou gavest me gentility and spirit; sprightliness and the graces; the wit of the day, and the eloquence of the moment; the address which gives birth to occasion, the patience which watches for it, the boldness which faces it; a thousand various charms, of which one more foolish would have been more proud, and, perhaps, made less use: thou knowest how my conduct has always

proved my gratitude, how dear thy worship is to me, how upon thy adored altars have I been prodigal of sacrifices. Yet, if thou hast reserved me for labours more than human; if taking pleasure to multiply temptations and obstacles upon my road, thou wilt that from the convent of the fauxbourg Saint Marceau to the convent of the fauxbourg Saint Germain, I am stopped from house to house, and without relaxation, forced to choose there between a passing infidelity, or an eternal separation; goddess, I declare to thee, that I am ready, that nothing shall astound me; that, were I to perish, I would try to go to Sophia: but, oh! be just as thou art beautiful, in proportion to the means and the difficulties, and to the extreme labours of thy favourite; thou hast not yet sufficiently endowed him: Venus, thou knowest it; he does not require either the perishable charms of your effeminate hunter,\* or the conjugal efforts of thy lame blacksmith;† it is needful that he who should run my brilliant career, possess the prodigious powers of your immortal lover,‡ or the fabulous talents of the husband of fifty sisters.§

\* Adonis.      † Vulcan.      ‡ Mars.      § Hercules.

But no, it is not this which Faublas asks of you, oh, beneficent divinity! You are not only the Queen of Pleasure, they call you also the Mother of Love! A young married couple, while they are lovers, cannot appear unworthy of your protection. From the height of the empyrean, look down without jealousy on a mortal beautiful as yourself; she sighs, she prays to you, she expects me. Honour her knight with a favourable look, come to my succour, overrule my dangers, disperse my enemies, conduct me to the desired asylum; deign to re-unite me to the more dear half of myself! Then I will burn, under your auspices, a delectable and pure incense; then there will be made to you, in heartfelt thanks, a delicious sacrifice, equally worthy of the minister, of the victim, and of the idol.

Whilst I made this poetic invocation, the prophetess finished her circuit in the dormitory; she descended to her own apartments, and sent to seek me; it is useless to say that I put on the necessary garment, and that I left my sword.

Ah, good evening, my amiable son-in-law!—  
Good evening, my charming mother-in-law!—

Faublas, tell me then by what chance—Relate to me, Coralie, by what metamorphosis—Monsieur, I am married.—I am married, madam.—But this event makes me fear for the honour of M. Le Blanc. But, oh, my Sophia! I fear much I shall be conquered by opportunity.—Hold, my pretty boy, fortunately thou arrivest *apropos*, for a husband is a foolish thing, and I am in want of a lover.—Hold, Coralie, I find thee again very happily, for the meeting a pretty woman can never displease me; and besides, I want an asylum, a dress, and a supper.

Madame Le Blanc made her attendants give me a nightgown, and commanded them to wait on me. They brought me the so-much needed wine, and the food I was so impatient for: I drank with the eagerness of the most sober musician, who, after playing three hours by the clock, without ceasing, in some fine house, has found, till then, no leisure moment for refreshment. I ate with the persevering avidity of some hungry author, who admitted regularly on a Monday to the table of some fat bookseller, makes it last him for the rest of the week. Whilst I employed my time thus in the



most useful manner, Coralie told me her history in a few words.

Some days after the comic catastrophe which deprived me at the same time of both father and son, a grave doctor was brought to my house. M. Le Blanc paid court to me, fell seriously in love, and offered me his hand; I could not refuse, because he is rich. I married him, therefore—Thou art married to him!—Yes, I married him at the church! and I will tell thee something even more strange; I have been faithful to him for these three months; but it begins to be unpleasant to me; oh, I own it, I am not made to be the calendar of old men.—Madam, in this case, I fear very much I am not come to your house quite so *apropos* as you did me the honour to make me believe.—Good! are you in want of compliments? Do not be so modest—Chevalier, to return to M. Le Blanc, I married him. He brought me into this house, which I find full of imaginary sick persons and quack-doctors. My husband, who gets richer every day by magnetism, teaches me the famous doctrine, which I practice very well, because it amuses me. Thou knowest, my friend, that I was born

a laugh, and that I am always diverted at the expense of those I deceive. Besides, they raise me upon tressles, and somnambulism is always a public comedy. Upon my honour, as to marriage, my new condition does not displease me. Coralie dances no more, but she magnetises; she foretells instead of declaiming; thou seest that there always remains a part for me to act, and that, in fact, I have only changed the theatre.—Very well, Coralie; but now that I have supped, let us talk seriously: you will not send me back to the dormitory?—Certainly not.—Thou consentest to pass the night with me, notwithstanding Hymen?—Notwithstanding Hymen! say on his account. Chevalier, thou hast wit, and I am obliged to tell thee that he who pays and the husband are both alike; and then I have learnt somewhere, that one always has a taste for one's first trade. I have not forgotten mine, Faublas; I know too, that respectable women have, of late, become interlopers, and I assure thee, that none of them engage in it more willingly than myself, or for a more amiable gentleman than I now embrace.

I gave Madam Le Blanc her kiss, and re-

sumed the conversation, which it had interrupted for a moment.

Thy husband, where is he?—At Beauvais, on some family business.—And your maid, will not she talk?—You are right; what a block-head I am! we must entrust her with the secret.

At these words, she rang the bell; the servant came; the mistress said to her: Hold! here is a Louis d'or, which I give you, but it behoves you not to tell my husband that this gentleman has slept with me: for I shall prove that you told him a lie; I shall tear your eyes out, and turn you away; go.

After having pronounced, with the most majestic air, this truly heroic harangue, Madame Le Blanc got into her bed, where she soon received me.

Alas! it was useless: magnetism, always deceitful, did not keep its promise, and Venus, apparently, did not hear me. In vain, to bring the happy moment of which she had conceived the hope in the dormitory, Coralie exhausted all the resources of her old trade and of her new art; like Justine, she finished by making, in her despair, this bitter reproach to my heart:

Ah! M. de Faublas, how changed I find you! Upon my honour, added she briskly, I should not have prophesied this.

And I, who did not care to enter into the details of a very long justification, did with Madame Le Blanc what I had done with Mademoiselle de Valbrun; I slept without answering a word.

Now, fastidious critic, who complainest that this history contains no moral, see how sublime and profound a one this is, which flows from the depth of the subject itself! Admire with how much justice, with what inevitable fatality, the two most unworthy rivals of Sophia are found, one after the other, and in the same manner, precisely punished by the way in which they had offended.

Yet, as the first duty of an historian is to be faithful, should this work appear a little less moral, impute not to the famous doctrine a blame which does not belong to it. Let us say, for the honour of the *science*, that it was, more than anything, by the help of magnetism that at the break of day the prophetess obtained from her patient the first proof of convalescence. But also, since it was necessary to be rigor-

ously exact, let it be added, that the female doctor, apparently restrained by the fear of compromising her art, dared not attempt to initiate me a second time.

It was nearly light in the morning when Madame Le Blanc made me put on a large black dress, which she had just chosen from the wardrobe of her husband. Before I determined what part there remained for me to take, it was needful to let M. de Valbrun know the asylum my good fortune had procured me. The commission was delicate; Coralie would execute it herself; but she had not been gone five minutes, when I saw her return. She entered abruptly, shut the door, bolted it, and with a frightened air, told me, that on going out, she had heard in the street the voices of a crowd of men; one of them, on taking hold of the knocker of the great gate, had said, this nun cannot be far off; it is necessary to search the neighbouring houses. You run to look over that of Commissary Chenon; thou, Griffart, guard the middle of the street, and these gentlemen will enter here with me; we have no want of permission, because it is a public-house. Coralie, in giving me this dreadful news, had led me

to a secret staircase. Chevalier, said she then, you cannot go by the court, because the agents of the police are there already.—They are there, Coralie?—Yes, my friend. While giving his orders, the life-guard knocked, my porter drew the cord, I had only time to fly here to tell you of your danger.—But by what way then shall I escape?—By this, Faublas: mount to the top of this little staircase, climb on the roof, and I beg of you to take care not to break your neck.—Do not be afraid.

Immediately I dart off, I mount, I arrive at the roof. I pass through the window, I leap over a gutter, and I walk with the timid precaution that the night and the irregularity of the way would naturally inspire me with. I had been some minutes, walking from precipice to precipice, when, in one of the gardens on which my sight fell, I discovered a man who, having seen me, gave the alarm. I hastened to seek an asylum in a little paltry room, which was only defended by a bad sash window, with paper panes instead of glass. There, upon some trusses of straw, a young man lay groaning, who, with a feeble voice, said to me: What are you come to do with me? What do you

want with me? Always a victim of the unjust scorn of men, I have then vainly hoped to screen my last moments from their insulting pity! Answer, indiscreet stranger—answer—why dost thou come to augment, by thy presence, the horror of my last awful hour?—Unfortunate man! what do you say? I am far from wishing to augment your griefs. Oh, that I could but soften them!—that I could but bring you some consolation!—I will receive none—leave me. I am too happy to die, if I can die without witness.—You make me tremble! Have you a grief so shameful that you can avow it to nobody?—Yes—one shameful—cruel—insupportable!—but a thousand times less so, than the humiliating avowal that thou in vain wouldst attempt to tear from me—leave me.

As he spoke, a child, whom I had not perceived, which laid near him, awoke, held out its arms to me, and cried: I am hungry.—Why do you not give it something to eat?—Why! answered the young man——Why!—and, with a mournful tone, with that tone which pierces the heart, and tears the entrails, the child cried to me again; I am hungry!—Ah!

poor wretches! what poverty!—Poverty! interrupted the young man; poverty!—it is true that it can blast everything—everything—even virtue itself! Is it my fault if, thrown by chance of birth into the most indigent class, I have seen an infancy tormented with a thousand wants, and condemned to all privations? Is it my fault if, making afterwards useless effort to soften ungrateful fortune, I am only delivered over to labours badly paid, because they were painful; to enterprises vain, because they were honest; to dangers ignoble, because they were unfruitful; and, when at length I became elevated to the bar, and believed a career open to me, at once useful and glorious, am I culpable for having encountered only compeers interested to impede the talent they were apprehensive of, only attorneys incapable of appreciating a merit which had not been boasted of; only friends in too low a situation to lend me ten Louis to purchase a *great cause*?\* Am I culpable for having taken to myself a companion in misfortune, because I have felt the lively goad of that sensual appetite, which is

\* Perhaps to bribe an attorney—to put a brief into his hands.—Tr.



the pleasure of the rich, and the want of the poor? Shall I be blamed because, flexible to the call of nature, and unpractised in that destructive act by which your fine ladies baulk her first object, my faithful wife gave me this child, by whom our poverty was so much augmented? Am I to be accused of spending too much for her sickness, who died soon of her malady, because she had no physicians? Alas! if my life has been, in its miserable course, crossed by a thousand accidents, agitated by innumerable chagrins, devoted to torments of every species, who dares to say the fault is my own? Yet, I have seen myself the object of their derision, ridicule has pursued me, humiliations have been heaped upon me; it has been necessary to endure menace, and pocket affronts; I have been loaded with curses and opprobrium; all, in fine, have kept me at a distance, all have fled from my approach, as if my proximity infected them, as if I carried on my detested forehead the sign of public reprobation. Thou great God! who has tried me so much; powerful being, who readeest the hearts, thou knowest if ever my conduct has justified the scorn of men; thou knowest if I

have not always done the best I could to make my poverty respectable.—What! has nobody succoured you?—Once only, impelled by extreme distress, determined by the peril of this infant, I did myself the violence to go and implore the assistance of a man who called himself my protector. If you knew with what a cruel tone he pitied me, with what barbarity he raised his voice, as he threw me his alms amidst a crowd of valets!—Without doubt I have merited that they should treat me in this manner: I have suffered one to take the title of my protector! I have sought benevolence in the palace of a rich man; I have only found charity! I have soiled, by a baseness, a life hitherto irreproachable.—Thou who art now listening to me, if nature has endowed thee with a strong soul, if thou hast preserved that pride of character which the consciousness of a pure life gives and justifies, thou wilt know that I could not, however pressing were my wants, receive without ignominy any aid so accorded; thou wilt feel that all my affronts, the most insupportable would be the last; that death became my only resource—No—generous unknown, keep thy gold, it is too late for me.—

I returned here desperate—For six and thirty hours three potatoes have sustained my child.—No, generous unknown, keep your gold, I tell you it is too late—But, I own it, your grief consoles, your tears soften me.—Oh! my child!—if like me thou art reserved for more painful trials, if like me, thou shouldst have to combat incessantly between opprobrium and famine; without doubt it would be better that thou go with me into the tomb; but heaven sends thee a deliverer. Oh! my son! I feel myself more tranquil, I leave thee to thy adopted father; he is, I see, feeling and benevolent.—Sir, watch over his infancy, and leave me to die.—Why to die? What blind delirium precipitates your youth to the tomb? Embittered by resentment for the injustice done you by an unfeeling man, is your heart susceptible to that little vanity which refuses all succour from a stranger with disdain; which rejects proudly him who presents an unknown hand? or would you suspect me of insulting interiorly those griefs over which I have shed so many tears?—No, the most tender interest reigns in your discourse and looks: I believe there is yet upon earth a man capable of some human sentiment. Well,

then, live for society, whose injustice towards you has not deprived it of the right to reclaim your talents, the exercise of which may become useful; live for your son, whom your premature death would deliver without defence to those strokes of fate which have outraged you so long; live for me—yes, assuredly your child shall be mine, yes, I will see him again; but I will see you both—my friend, do not be obstinate in keeping a dreadful resolution—do not refuse me.—listen to me.—For more than a year, thrown into a new world, continually distracted by the pleasures of a too dissipated life, I have neglected duties that nothing could dispense with my fulfilling; I own it, occupied entirely by myself, I have always forgotten such of my fellow creatures as ought to have been perpetually in my remembrance. And how many honest families, now ruined without resource, I could perhaps have supported by a part of the money prodigally spent in vain amusements! and how many unfortunates have, perhaps, perished that I could have saved from their despair! my friend, deign to help me to repair this fault, which I will never pardon myself for committing.—I do not pretend to

offer you a feeble succour which will take you only for a moment from the horror of your deplorable situation, two hundred Louis are in this purse; borrow the half of them of me.—The half!—Borrow them, I beg of you; one hundred Louis will provide for your more urgent wants, and will help you to bring your public talents to perfection, will give you time to wait for occasions to show them, in fine, to make you known; a hundred Louis will perhaps be a germ to your fortune! Well! my friend, when you shall be at your ease, you will go also to seek misfortunes to console; and the first time that an unhappy being shall owe his life to you, you will be acquitted of your debt to me.—Oh, beneficence! Oh, generosity!—Come, my friend, receive this money; take courage, let us embrace, and console yourself. Go, I know well, poverty is only shameful when it is the fruit of bad conduct; and almost always a donation, while it honours him who gives, makes the eulogium also of the receiver.—Oh, my redeeming angel!—it is Providence—yes, it is God—it is God himself who has sent you to save us.—Go, each day I will be at the feet of his altar.—I will thank the Eternal—I will

—I will call down on you the blessings of heaven.

His voice was broken by sobs, and the child moved his little hand caressingly over my face bathed with the tears of his father. Oh, moment full of charms! how inexpressibly delicious wert thou!

Sir, resumed the young man, whose voice began to be strengthened, deign to acquaint me to whom I owe my life.—I cannot.—You refuse to tell me! Take back your gold, sir.—But—you wish to hide yourself from my gratitude! Sir, I do not accept your money.—But first know my reasons.—Sir, I will not accept it.—Well! I am going to give you proofs of a confidence without bounds. I call myself the Chevalier de Faublas.—The Chevalier de Faublas! “Where will so much virtue find a niche!”\*—How!—Oh, my benefactor! I ask pardon a thousand times, I offend very involuntarily.—My first adventures have made some noise in the capital, and you condemn me immediately; perhaps you are a little too prompt, a little too severe. Oh, my friend! excuse the

\* Where will the statue of such a man be put up. A line of Molière which has become a proverb.

follies of inexperience, pity the passions of youth, and to judge of me, stay some time, you do not know me yet.—Ah! do you forgive an exclamation without doubt indiscreet. I know you, and you have a right to all my esteem, you will correct yourself, I am sure of it; with an excellent heart, it is impossible to be long misled.

He took my hand which he kissed many times. Embracing him, I asked his name. He said, Florval.

Florval, I love your noble frankness; are you sincerely disposed to honour us with your friendship?—What a question!—I shall see you then in a happier time?—What!—Florval, it is necessary for me to hide myself, I do not know what is to become of me, they pursue me.—They pursue you? May your enemies waste themselves in vain researches! May their rage be confounded! But why this dress? They have already seen it perhaps? Why do you not take another?—Which?—See, in that corner are some rags. They are my robe, and the only moveable which it was essential for me always to preserve. This morning I resolved on going to sell it, but I have not had power to reach

the staircase. And then what would they have given me for it? It is so bad! Take it for your own, it can disguise you perfectly; hide your dress underneath, and over it let your floating locks fall in all their length, they are still sufficiently powdered.

While occupied with my dress, I allowed myself to ask several questions of Florval, to which he eagerly answered.

So you are an advocate, Florval?—Alas! yes, sir.—I have always believed this profession as lucrative as honourable.—Ah! sir, what a profession it is to force a poor devil to pay you beforehand in order not to be obliged to summons him! To engross for an attorney, cases at two-pence a page! Every morning to tell lies to little audiences for a crown! Ah! sir, what a trade! what a trade!—Yet there is so much business at the courts that you ought to be always occupied.—People think so; but then the *associated order* is there for renown. I have seen a brother who was in fashion, caressing fortune who smiled upon him, but neglecting the glory he might have hoped for, in the same day draw up petitions, compile consultations, hurry up cases, make up memorials,



plead in all the courts, and by this murderous avidity suck the blood of fifty impoverished clients, and devour the substance of fifty famishing brothers at the bar! Oh! sir! What a profession!—Never mind, Florval, try to make yourself known, and——And the way, sir? if you knew how disgusting it is to me, with how many delays they will wear out my patience, with what address will they environ my first efforts with difficulties almost insurmountable!—Florval, better luck is in store for you, doubtless. Think of celebrated orators; they have, like you, had obstacles to vanquish.—What do you say, sir? All push back rising talents, the sublimity of some great models makes one despair, but nevertheless how disgusting is the inconceivable success of certain people so unworthy, so very unworthy of it! Do you believe there is in literature anything but usurped reputations? At the bar, sir, as elsewhere, timid merit blushes and hides itself, while audacious mediocrity comes forward, solicits, manœuvres, sermonises, gains its point, and enjoys a glory which is not always ephemeral. Why, when yesterday, with rage in my heart, I regained this garret to expire with

famine, why did my brother E—, during all his life drunk with success, die of an indigestion under gilded roofs? Ah! sir, what a profession! What a profession!—So there's none amongst you then who deserves his reputation?—One might mention many, whose talents in reality do honour to the bar; would to heaven that the bar always honoured them, that no secret hate, arising from daily rivalries, and base envy, the sure followers of success, did not dog their steps to work their ruin, and to blight their glory! Ah! sir, what a profession! What a profession! I have seen it too near. Ah! who would follow it, if he did not now and then, at distances of time, meet some wretches to defend, at the risk of being erased from the list.—Florval, my friend, Florval, misfortune sours you.—It is true, answered he almost laughing, it is true that one does not look at the prettiest side of things, when one has been without food two days. Chevalier, you are nearly dressed—I cannot descend into the street—you have done nothing for me if you do not also take the trouble of sending me some food.—My friend, I fly to do it.

While he spoke, I arranged the robe so that

its age was a little less remarkable. Each of the sides were torn below; I was careful to turn them up elegantly on each side, as if I was afraid of the mud in the streets, I stuffed one of the lappets in my fob, I held the other under my arm. A long rent left my breast discovered; I made a grand fold and put pins in it like an artist. As to the back, the holes were hid under the plaits; so all was in the best manner, and the young advocate ready to disappear. I had the air of a judge advocate. Adieu Florval; if by chance you are questioned—I will sooner suffer the last extremity than expose you to danger.—But will it be long before I see you again?—I know nothing about it Florval.—Oh, I will seek for you, I will enquire after you; M. de Faublas, deign not to forget him who owes all to you.—Florval, I will not forget my friend.—Adieu, my benefactor! delivering angel, adieu!

And, as I was at the end of the corridor, the child called out with its little clear voice: Adieu, papa!

His papa! and the father calls me his delivering angel! and I have saved two victims from death! and my eyes are yet moist with the

sweetest tears which I have ever shed! and my heart is full of a delicious sentiment! Oh, what ineffable pleasures those taste who perform good actions! Oh, supreme happiness, of which I have only a feeble idea! But what is it to give money to a confidential person to distribute? We should go ourselves! Oh, my Sophia! one day we will mount together into garrets: we will penetrate into the little cabins of the poor. There, we shall be able to discover misery which shrinks from observation, to prevent its painful avowals, to apportion our help to its wants, and to calm its doubts by our consolations. There, my charming wife, twenty unhappy beings, supported by thy gifts, shall return thee homage acceptable to thy heart. Oh, how much more beautiful wilt thou appear to me, when I shall have seen thee weep over their secret troubles! when thou shalt return, proud of their benedictions! They will scarcely see me at all, they will only look at thee! It will be thy hand which they will kiss: it will be thee whom they will call delivering angel! Thou hast the appearance of one; each of thy features attest a soul divine! Oh, my Sophia! thou wilt sustain the fathers of

families, orphans, poor widows, cast-off daughters——widows! girls! Faublas, fly from the horrible idea which is arising! Respect unhappy beauty, which you have succoured, or renounce every sentiment of honour, and remain forever loaded with the just execrations of mankind.

I went on reflecting thus, even to the street door, where the perils which surrounded me, fixed my ideas upon different objects. I had scarcely quitted the hospitable threshold, when many men already followed me. One of them in particular frightened me with a very scrutinising glance; then, with an air, half irresolute, half decided, conveying alternately his squinting eyes over my pale countenance, and on the broad faces of his vile companions he seemed often to consult, and often to say: It is he! I saw the moment of my danger at hand. Persuaded that I could not escape but by drawing upon impudence, I made my deportment very assured, and my memory serving me, *apropos*, I repeated, in a loud voice, the name Madame Le Blanc told me. Griffart, cried I:—Who is that? said he to me. Do you know me? I know you not exactly yet.—And

you, gentlemen?—Worse than not knowing you exactly, answered one of them, we do not know you at all. Then I took a noble look of disdain over my shoulder, and reviewed the whole troop. I measured the chief from head to foot; then I let fall these words: What, my fine gentleman, you do not know the son of Commissary Chenon? At his revered name, you should have seen these knaves, seized with respect, suddenly take off their woollen hats, or cotton bonnets; with an air of quality, grip their fore-tops, gently throw their right foot behind, and make me, in this manner, with the most humble excuses, their obeisances. With a nod of the head, I motioned that I was satisfied; and addressing myself to Griffart: Well, my brave fellow, is there anything new stirring?—Not yet, sir, but a long time cannot pass before there will. I believe that we have squinted on her upon a roof. The fine girl must come down if she breaks her neck. She has taken the dress of our sex, but that's all one. I'll warrant she don't deceive Griffart. Both ends of the street are guarded, and no one can pass without being examined.

I then said: Hold, my friends, go to break-

fast at the public-house; thou, Griffart, I charge thee to carry immediately a loaf of bread, a piece of roast meat, and a bottle of wine, to one M. Florval, who lives there—in this alley, the fifth floor. What remains of my six francs, take with thee to the public-house, and drink with thy companions.

All these men exhausted themselves in thanks more gross than energetic, and I found their gestures as disgusting as they were ridiculous; and their joy made me sad, it was ignoble as themselves. This pretended nun whom they pursue has taken, they say, the dress of a man; if I could disguise myself as a woman, I do not know but I might escape. Ah! ah! who is this engaging damsel, who, from the window of the second floor calls politely to those who pass? Let us go there. Perhaps with money—Let us go there, we shall see; I can at last change or not; if I cannot do better, I must go to the street to present to the inspector the commissary's son.—Let us go up.—It is bad company, Faublas; but faith, let him save himself that can.

I entered quietly into the room of the poor girl, who had left the door half open. She

saw my black gown, and believed me to be the devil. The piercing cry she gave could have been heard by all her customers in the neighbourhood. I, who could not think of running the gauntlet with this modern Aspasia's crowd of lovers, hastened, in order to re-assure her, to take off the dreadful gown. Her mortal fear disappeared as soon as she heard me protest I was not the commissary. It was another thing when she saw me draw from my purse a double Louis, the sweetest hope shone over her whole face, now perfectly serene.

Mademoiselle these two Louis are for you.— I am very willing said she, and quicker than lightning she ran to the door, and closed it, to the window, and drew over it a worm-eaten cloth, that people less diffident would call a curtain; and to the recess where her bed stood. —Come, come, my too complaisant and too lively girl, if you would have heard me to the end, you would have been spared these useless demonstrations, which may cost your self-love as much as your modesty. In reality, child, thou hast wrongly construed my intentions. For the two Louis which I offer, I want only that you should furnish me with woman's



clothes, and that thou shouldst help me to dress. I am willing, answered she.—That is charming! you are willing to do everything one asks you!—By the Virgin! I must act up to my profession!—What do you give me, here?—a petticoat that should be white, full of splashes from top to bottom?—That is only because I came the other night from the play when it rained.—And this handkerchief is torn?—I did it on last Monday in belabouring an attorney's clerk, who would not pay me.—And this dirty handkerchief?—An old man tumbled it.—And this morning cap, all brown?—That was my lover, in a fit of jealousy, threw it in the fire?—Never mind, miss, take your rags again, I will have none of them.—Stay, child, give me your best clothes; I will pay you what you ask for them; the two Louis are for keeping the secret.—Who will say a word, I wonder? Upon the word of an honest girl, Fanchette is going to give you the gayest things she has, her Pantheon-dress; stop, I will let you have them at the cost price: four Louis; and over and above, you shall have this large black hat with its plume of feathers, and these proofs of my friendship if you will, because

you are very genteel.—For the robe and the hat, willingly; very much obliged for the rest.

Still I wanted a shift. Fanchette has much trouble to find me one moderately good; she had more trouble not to outrage my timid shamefacedness in putting it on. The gown she put on afterwards, went on as well as if it had been made for me. How well this dress fits you, said Fanchette: ah, resumed she, after a moment's reflection, I ask no better; for thou art the prettiest man I ever set my eyes on! and if I had not been in a hurry to put myself to rights, she was going to embrace me very indecently.

No, mademoiselle; no, I tell you. Stay, Fanchette, here are the six Louis that I owe you. Do me the favour to go and get a hackney-coach, and bring it here to me. You will accompany me in it to the gate of the Luxembourg. In leaving thee there, I will give thee, besides, four half crowns for thy ride; but, pray make haste; and, above all, do not say a word to anyone—I promise you I will not: I love you, because that——Go, Fanchette; make haste.

She had not been gone five minutes, when

I heard the key turn in the lock. Judge of my surprise and alarm, when, the door opening, I saw a stranger enter, who, not less familiar than if he had been in his own house, said: Good day! without looking at me, and threw his cane and hat upon the bed. I saw that his shaking legs bore him contrary ways; that he frequently deceived himself; that he ran against the furniture; and knocked against the walls. His mouth opened with difficulty, his tongue scarcely articulated, his hair was deranged; he took a chair and sat down on one side: then, in rising, he made this judicious remark to himself: I was cheated! He added: Fanchette, I am sure thou hast been uneasy that I did not return home before this morning; it has displeased thee, as it had a right.—Ah, it was because there was such a world of people at the English hotel! What pleasure there is in that place! How many people ruin themselves there!—with such glee!—it is charming to see them!—but they are contented! There has scarcely been a quarrel—so you may judge!—excepting one, in one of them was killed; the other—but that is all.

At these words, he rose, to come straight to me, but, without intending it, he went the other way, and fell against the sash, some panes of which he broke. After many circuits, he at last got to me; and during some seconds, he stared full at me, with an air which would have amused me greatly if I had had less inquietudes.—I is I, resumed he at last; it is thee! it is thy chamber; and thy handsome gown!—but I am drunk! oh, yes, I am drunk! Thou hast black eyes, and I see them blue; Thou art fair, and yet seemest to me brown! Thou art little, and appearest large to me! Yes, I am tipsy—that's certain! but what of that? I will persuade thee that thou art genteel, and I am thy lover!

He approached, I retreated; he followed me, I repulsed him, he held me; I made a menacing gesture, he struck me with his fist; I gave him two for one; he threw himself on my plume of feathers; I seized him by the hair; and his fall drew me down. The Chevalier de Faublas, stretched upon the floor, rolls in the dust with the vile lover of a girl of the town! What seemed likely to turn the fall in favour of my adversary, in this unworthy combat, was,

my being dressed so inconveniently for a game of fisty-cuffs. Yet victory would not have been long uncertain because there was, in our manner of fencing this difference, to my advantage, that, without saying a single word, I tried to parry rather than to thrust; instead of which, the wretch, swearing like a coachman, neglected parrying, and only sought to strike, and to hold me. One may judge, then, that the most noisy was not the least beaten; but before I was able to disengage myself, the neighbours ran in to see the occasion of so great a noise. Charmed to find this opportunity to get rid of their odious lodgers, they began by loading us with imprecations and blows. In the end, they separated us. We descended, and were both of us delivered over to the guard, without being searched.

Two soldiers put the handcuffs on my companion, two more gave me their hands, the people hooted me, and the boys followed me. At the end of the street I passed triumphantly through the middle of the police scouts, who did not expect, under these gaudy clothes, and with this honourable escort, their pretended nun dressed in man's clothes. But how many

streets were we made to walk through! what mud, collected in the way, soiled the beautiful pantheon dress! What indecent discourse I heard on the road! with what brutality my uncivil conductors handed me along! Ah! poor girls, God keep you from the Parisian guard!

God preserve you also from the commissary! a justice of the peace, acting the magistrate, condemns without hearing! A stupid corporal recounts facts of which he is ignorant, his soldiers bear witness to what they have not seen, many witnesses cried out that I was a girl of the town, who fought with my lovers; the expeditious clerk, comprehending little, but writing all, closed the commitment before he even deigned to inform himself if we had any means of defence; and all at once, from the despotic tribunal of the proud citizen, came this decision, without appeal: "the profligate to the Hotel de la Force: the girl to Saint Martin."

To St. Martin! It is then true that I am to be conducted there! it is then true that the most precocious youth, he who many times, in certain cases, has shown himself so superior to many grown men, he whose success in gallantry yet occupies the astonished town, the Chevalier

de Faublas, in fine, proclaimed a girl by a public judgment, sees himself shut up in the chapel of ease of an hospital, in order to wait there apparently till some leisure day, when the head of the police will cause him, with a hundred prostitute companions, to be transferred to the metropolis.

And why do I let myself be taken to this frightful prison? Why! would not the avowal of my sex at the commissary's, have drawn upon me a number of questions, which it would have been very embarrassing to me to answer? At all events, will not this hazardous means always remain a resource? and ought I not to flatter myself that a thousand others, almost as easy, will spare me the danger of it? With address and with gold I shall force the gates of Saint Martin more easily than those of the Bastile: but I ought to make haste; an instant may ruin me. In the suburb of Saint Marceau, become for the second time the theatre of my glory and my misfortunes, a thousand accidents may discover traces the Chevalier de Faublas has left of his route. Come, quick, let us call some friends to my aid. Friends! I have only acquaintances at Paris. Rosambert, he has

played me a dirty trick: Rosambert! and then he is far off. Derneval is further yet: Madame de B—— is perhaps not yet arrived. Besides, how shall I give her news of myself without exposing her? But my friend, my love, my wife! It is she! Ah! yes, it is to her that I must send! No, du Portail is there, who, without doubt, has his eyes open. He may intercept the dispatches, and carry me off again. No, I will not use a name which may deprive me of the sight of my Sophia. The Vicomte de Valbrun remains. It is not to his private house that I must send; I know not where his hotel is; the commissioners will inform me; let us write to the Vicomte.

What I tell you in thirty lines, was the result of two hours' reflections; so my letter to the Vicomte was not finished when they came to call Fanchette. Seized with alarm, I only resolved to do my best, and gained the first wicket. There I saw an elegant woman who, having cast upon me two or three disdainful glances, ordered me, in a severe tone, to follow her. The door of the prison opened, my proud protectress mounted gravely into her carriage, and by a motion of the head, told me to take



the place opposite. I obeyed, and we drove off. Then, addressing myself to the unknown, I said: Madam, how many thanks——You owe me none, interrupted she; it is true that I have taken you from this fine place, where you were not badly placed, I think; but it is not to oblige you personally, I assure you.—Yet, madam——Yet, mademoiselle, I beg you to believe me.—Why will you refuse the just homage?—Good God! what fine words! I like them not, mademoiselle. Let us not talk together, I beg of you.

There was a moment of silence, during which I asked myself who was the uncivil deliverer, who did me so great a service, and treated me so ill, where this adventure would bring me, and what was going to become of me?

The beautiful lady who had ordered me to hold my tongue, soon commanded me to speak. Do you know how to read? she said.—A little, madam.—And to write?—Yes, though not much.—You can dress hair?—Woman's?—To be sure; certainly.—Tolerably, madam; is this all that is necessary?—And enough too, mademoiselle; you forget that it does not become you to question me.

The carriage soon arrived before a very fine house; the unknown, having made me traverse superb apartments, finished by leaving me to my reflections in a sort of cabinet for dressing in, where I remained alone some minutes, which appeared to me to be ages. In fine, my deliverer appeared; she brought me clothes herself, for which she desired me to change mine, for I disgusted her, she said; and without waiting for an answer, she began by taking off my handkerchief. I rather guess, said she, throwing into my bosom a scrutinizing glance, that this courtesan, who looks so pretty, has some secret defect. Faugh! this is as flat as my hand.

To the surprise which seized me at first, soon succeeded a more painful sensation. This great lady, so proud, so imperious, and yet alert as a waiting maid, and an experimental observer, made me as uncomfortable with her help as with her observations, and distressed me as much by her kindness as by her severity. I tried to get rid of her good offices; she found my attempts to do so very impertinent, and what she called the grimaces of pretended modesty were of no avail.

There was a knot; she undid it very dexterously, and at the same time disembarrassed me of my first petticoat. Good God! madam, you lower yourself to wait thus upon a servant.—Well, answered she, but if I choose to support the shame and the trouble?—Madam, I will not permit it; I cannot bear it; you are too good.—And is that a reason for you to show yourself so ridiculously modest, so obstinate?

She spoke with quickness; yet her tongue went less quick than her hand; so that I saw, almost immediately, notwithstanding my vain precautions, my second petticoat fall; alas! it was the last.

At least there remained yet one safeguard, the wretched chemise of which I hoped not to be easily despoiled. What obstinacy! what foolish reserve! said the irritated lady. Without doubt, if I was a man, mademoiselle would make less to do. Scarcely had she said this, than she passed behind me, and instantly, with a rapid cut of the scissors, from my reins to my shoulders, she cut in two the unfortunate chemise, of which it became easy for her to take the pieces away.

Oh, readers, judge of my trouble! you see here the poor Fanchette very succinctly undressed, and so much the more embarrassed, as the only veil which remained to her having been dragged in the mud in wallowing in the streets of Paris, I cannot, in conscience, deny that I was in want of clean linen. So the obliging person who presided at my toilette, hastened to throw over my head a fine shift, that she ordered me to put on. It was, above all, the operation that I dreaded, and for the completion of the mischief, every instant rendered it more difficult. How will ever this young girl so excessively awkward, in this most critical moment of all, have the dexterity necessary to hide from these quick eyes the too apparent youth! I know not by what fatality my imagination, till then asleep, awoke more ardently; it electrified me, it inflamed me for the charms of this stranger, whose prompt and light hand I can yet fancy myself feeling, whose look always pursues me, whose all-powerful look, awakening dying desire, suddenly produced in me the most unexpected effect, the effect in general auspicious, but now unfortunate, the effect that, two hours before, Coralie dared

not hope, even with the aid of magnetism. What shall I do, then? What is going to become of me? By what means shall I keep my secret?

The part I took will astonish the reader, he will laugh at my expense; but never mind. As I boast sometimes of my prowess, I must also own my defects. Know then, that, imagining there was nothing better to be done, I had the weakness to turn my back to the enemy.

This behaviour is not polite, said she, I own to you that these manners are not such as I am accustomed to.

From the tone in which these words were pronounced I could perceive that the offended person, far from giving way to movements of impatience and anger, experienced a mischievous satisfaction, and was merely ironical. A slight glance which I hazarded, confirmed me in this idea. I saw that she repressed with difficulty the emotions of violent laughter. It was then, and yet to my shame I avow it, it was only then that it came into my mind that I had been a long quarter of an hour her dupe, that for a whole quarter of an hour my protectress quizzed, entirely at her ease, an inno-

young man, whom she pretended to believe a girl of the town. This discovery filled me at first with spite; but I consoled myself almost as soon, by thinking of the sweet vengeance my mishap promised me.

Ah! whoever you are, cried I, you are not formed for such incivilities. Yes, I am sure of it, you ought not to be more accustomed to suffer, than I am myself to permit them: and it is very sincerely that I beg your pardon.—Pardon! repeated she, laughing at last most heartily; but if one grants it only to boldness, do you believe you merit it?—Assuredly not, replied I, a little stunned with this reproach.—Well then, said she with a force of wit little known, I wait till a real offence.

I did not leave her time to finish, for her air, her discourse, and above all, her deportment, spoke a rare assurance, which she summoned up to astonish at first the most intrepid, but afterwards to give courage to the most timid; so precipitating myself before her, in this humble and formidable posture, so convenient for a lover, so menacing for a mistress, I made, in the most decided manner, this declaration of love and war: upon my word, ma-

dam, I believe that you will not wait for it long. Without any emotion, she replied: whatever you may say, I do not believe you have such temerity. Besides, I inform you that I am not one of those women who are frightened at a word; they are feeble beauties who believe in all menaces.

The answer was clear: acts, and nothing else would do with this lady. I could not reasonably doubt that she knew pretty well who I was, that the danger of my presence and of my very slight attire, nevertheless, did not astonish her; in fine, that the Chevalier de Faublas could without indiscretion, and even ought to declare himself.

She received the avowal with infinite grace. This complete triumph was disputed only just enough to make me know that it was of some value. I was yet in the lap of victory, and upon the point of seizing the fruits, that the conqueror himself contributes to, when a carriage made the pavement of the court resound beneath it. The Vicomte already! said my unknown; let us make haste—let us make haste and finish this nonsense.

She made haste in reality; and as if I had

not had myself some interest to do so, she, as one may say, obliged me to do it.

Thanks to my promptitude, and above all to her own, what this original person called our nonsense, was over; but the third intruding person, to whom all this would not have appeared so very pleasant, soon made himself be heard near us; and my proud protectress, who had no desire that they should know how she amused herself with her protegees, did not confine herself to putting herself to rights, but gave me a sign to collect my scattered clothes, and to escape into a neighbouring closet.

I threw myself into it; when the intrusive cavalier, whose too sudden visit sent me off, entered. He is changing his dress there, said she.—Without the help of your maid? he demanded.—She answered: if he cannot do without it, we will call her; but why, except there is an absolute necessity, should we put a third person in possession of our secret.

He then came in to me; it was M. de Valbrun. Good day, my dear Faublas, said he, embracing me. Are you not pleased with the zeal that the Baroness de Fonrose has shown in your favour?—Pleased! exclaimed I; it is, in real-



ity, too little to say.—Ah! I have been very troublesome: your dear Faublas, interrupted she, laughing; ask him what he thought of it; ask him if I have not already begun the vengeance of my sex. Come, gentle knight, added she, there must be no rancour, you see in me only a friendly fairy, who comes to carry you away from the enchantress; and as soon as you are dressed, come respectfully, and in token of gratitude, to kiss my hand.

Whilst she spoke, I observed her face reflected in a glass on the other side of the room. Her deportment had so much changed, that there only remained a cold dignity, and the perfect calmness of her face, seemed to announce the absence of all passions. I saw that the Baroness was an excellent comedian; but whatever pleasure I took in seeing her in her new part, I could give to it only a short attention. All the feminine accoutrements in which it was necessary to muffle myself up, caused me not a little embarrassment. It was to me a labour without end; I believe that it would have lasted till night, if Madame de Fonrose had not come at the repeated invitation of the Vicomte, to help to finish it. In

the end, but always to oblige him, she carried her complaisance so far as to put in order, with her noble hand, my disordered locks. She was still dressing my head, when I cried out: M. de Valbrun, let us go.—Go where?—To see Sophia.—Sophia! is she in Paris?—In these suburbs even, at the convent of——in——street.—So much the better; but for an instant, moderate your impatience, listen to me; I ought to tell you what I have done; and to consider with you on measures which must now be taken.—I should by right, have begun, M. le Vicomte, with assuring you of my gratitude.—Are you anxious to prove it to me?—Do not doubt that I am.—Well, do me the pleasure to hear me.—With all my heart; but let us go.—What impatience! pray, hear me.—My Sophia.—We will speak of her presently. Chevalier, in the middle of last night I returned to my private house, as I had promised you. Justine, in recounting to me what had passed, gave me great uneasiness about you. Not knowing what was going to become of you, and wishing to remain at hand, to give you aid if any occasion presented itself, I determined to remain with Justine. This little girl, who

appears very fond of you,' was continually at the street window. Twice in the morning she thought she saw you, and in two different dresses. In two hours she came to me, saying, that the guard were bearing you away, that she knew you very well, notwithstanding your new dress. So she got a faithful emissary to mingle with the crowd that followed you; and return, as soon as possible, to tell me what had become of you. On his return, I was not less enchanted than surprised, to know that a dreadful judgment came to send the pretended Fanchette to St. Martin. Then I flew to Madame de Fonrose.—At first, said she, I could not but interest myself much in the fate of a young man like you. I hastened directly to demand the mandate, at the hotel of the police, and you know what a quick use I made of it, which set you at liberty.—Madame, accept my warmest thanks.—M. de Faublas, answered the Vicomte hear me to the end—Sophia waits for me.—We will speak of her; hear me to the end. Whilst the Baroness went to the police, I returned to the suburbs of St. Marceau, to learn what I could. There was no longer any enquiry about Dorothea; the Chevalier de Fau-

blas only is spoken of everywhere.—Now! already!—Can you be astonished at it? The declaration of a nun named Ursula, who has, she says, been ill-treated by the ravishers of the nun, proved nothing against you; but what has discovered all, is the complaint of a certain M. de Flourvac, who said he was attacked in the inclosure of the magnetisers, by a young man, who escaped in his shirt, sword in hand; and the resistance which was here made to the officers of the police by Madame Le Blanc, who chose rather to let them break open the door of her apartment than to open it; also the deposition that the true Fanchette has been forced to make, who, returned to her hotel, has been interrogated upon facts and articles. The meeting together of so many extraordinary events has betrayed you: the most astonishing events have been brought about, upon account of the most astonishing young man. In two hours, perhaps, they will go to seek you at St. Martin's, in order to transfer you to the Bastille. Madame will no doubt be troubled about it, but she is well with the minister: so that, if they do not find you, I am easy about all the rest. The friends of the Comte de G—, whom

one of your seconds has killed, call loudly for vengeance; but I have friends also; I enjoy some credit, we will smother up this affair. In the meanwhile——In the meanwhile, I will see my Sophia if I ruin myself——You will ruin yourself, without seeing her.—Without seeing her!—If you dare to put a foot out of doors, you will be arrested. It is not to be doubted that the most vigilant agents of the police are upon the watch. Pray wait some days.—Some days! day are ages!—Will you find them less long in a state-prison, and when you will even lose the hope of ever seeing your mistress again?—She is my wife, Vicomte——

The Baroness interrupted us: Chevalier, if what you say is true, I wish you joy of it.—Very true, they will search long enough before they find one who merits to be adored like her.—I believe you.—One more worthy of the tenderness and respect of her happy husband. Chevalier, resumed the Vicomte, permit me—one who——Pray, time is precious; let us come to some resolution.—Promise me not to expose yourself.—Alas! I shall not see her then to-day!—Think that your affair may now be arranged; but, if you were once a prisoner, I

could answer for nothing. Chevalier, you will consider—Ah! Vicomte, you see me penetrated with gratitude; in a more fortunate hour, I shall have less, and shall express it better; it is to-day, that to give you one proof, I surrender myself to your counsels. M. de Valbrun, regulate my conduct, and I will obey.—Chevalier, I cannot now offer you an asylum at my house, because they will certainly come there to find you.—Why should he not remain here? said the Baroness.—Because he will no longer be here in safety, madam.—Do you think so, Vicomte?—I ask you yourself what you think?—I—I see not too——What! madam, after what you have been doing!—Oh, but Vicomte!—You astonish me, madam, replied he with an air of some displeasure, excepting that, if you really desired to take care of the Chevalier, I would not oppose it, and only now from my anxiety for him; you know that I am not jealous. Yet I like, said she, the rather piqued tone in which you say so; it proves that you have more attachment to me than you are willing should appear. Gentlemen, added she, it is late, let us go into the dining-room, where we shall not stay long, and, during dinner, all

three will think upon the means of saving this amiable young man, the friend of all women, and the true lover of his wife.

Madame de Fonrose presented me her hand, which the Vicomte seized more promptly than myself; we went to sit down to table. The Baroness, who did not come out of her profound meditation, only to look steadily at me from time to time, broke silence by a loud burst of laughter. The Vicomte asked her the cause of this sudden gaiety.—I shall explain it to you in the saloon, said she, rising.

I was afflicted by this sudden freak, for the lively appetite which remained, made me feel that I should have liked to finish my dinner.

I have found for this young girl, said she to us, a place that will suit her marvellously in all respects. A place! cried the Vicomte.—A place! yes. Female factotum, she will be lady-companion, secretary and reader at Madame de Lignolle's—The young Countess?—Yes.—A lady-companion to the young Countess! It is laughable!—What matters, Vicomte? she wants one; and the one I provide her with will be better than any other, I believe.—But on account of M. de Lignolle.—M. de Lignolle!

M. de Lignolle is a very ugly man, to whom I have wished such a thing a long while. One of my intimate friends accuses him of faults; of such faults as a woman never pardons. Mademoiselle du Portail, added the Baroness, turning towards me, I recommend the little Countess to you; she is young and pretty, a little careless, very lively in person, and uncommonly capricious also. I know a fancy that she affects: it often happens that she wishes to be a prude for a quarter of an hour; then, pretending the profound ignorance of the most unpractised virgin, she will not understand the commonest pleasantries; and, the instant after, you hear her hold, with an indifferent air, a very licentious discourse. Besides, she has whims that will ruin her if she does not take care. At her age, she flies the world; nobody meets her anywhere; and few people have the good luck to find her at home. I believe that her ugly husband is not displeased at this economical retreat; but it is not he who exacts it, it is she who insists on it. M. de Faublas, I charge you to form this child, for it is absolutely necessary to get her into society.—Ah, my Sophia! Baroness, my Sophia!—Yes, yes,



your Sophia, you rogue, no less fortunate than dangerous, if public report has not deceived me in your character and talents, Sophia, since she is absent, will not save the Countess. I will only say a single word to you about her stupid husband. He is a heavy man, badly proportioned in his body, and his large face, which was perhaps handsome in his youth, had never any expression. They say that many women tried to please him, but nobody can tell of one whom he has loved. This gentleman has consecrated his time to the muses; he is of the number of those little *beaux esprits* with which Paris swarms; of the noble literati who expect to go to the Temple of Fame by sonnets periodically printed in the public papers. He will be passionately fond of you, if you take pains to declare against modern philosophy and to find out enigmas. That, madam, said M. de Valbrun, is a portrait painted by the hand of a master; I discover the pencil of an offended woman. Vicomte, answered she, I have not told you it was myself who had reason to be offended with him.—Now! I swear it, replied he; but tell us of what you are thinking.

I interrupted both to make this observation:

instead of being woman to the countess, can I not be woman elsewhere? Would it be impossible for me in this dress to penetrate into the convent of my Sophia? Now! replied the Vicomte, the danger would be extreme! and the means to remain there?—The Baroness interrupted him: stay, for I interest myself in this young woman. Chevalier, you give me the idea of a project of which the success is infallible. To-morrow, yes to-morrow, I promise you, I will go myself to this convent, to inquire if there is not room—For a young widow, a friend of yours, whom you will take upon you to bring after to-morrow, Baroness?—After to-morrow, no, but at the end of the week.—O, my Sophia!—Don't leap so! said Madame de Fonrose, your head dress will come off. She added: I admire this stratagem, as much as I approve it; nobody would believe it was a husband who thought of it. Madam, said the Vicomte, we can go, it is dusk; but do you believe that Madame de Lignolle will take her companion in this evening?—Yes, sir, I will make it my business.—And M. de Lignolle will not oppose this fancy of his wife?—You know that he has no will of his own when she has

spoken; you know very well that when the Countess has pronounced the fatal *I will*, the Count must will it. Let us go, chevalier, added she, you will call yourself Mademoiselle de Brumont.

We descended; as I got into the carriage I saw that they placed a trunk behind. It contains your wardrobe, said the Baroness. I begged the Vicomte to come and see me next day at M. de Lignolle's; he promised that he would come in the evening to inform me what Mad. de Fonrose should have done. Then leaning to his ear, to speak confidentially: I believe Madame de B— returned home; could not Justine give her news of me, and send me word of anything relative to herself?—Yes, I will take charge of that. That is to say, you are still interested about Madame de B—?—No, not in the way you mean; no, upon my honour; but I am very impatient to know how the Marquis has received her.—I will manage to bring you word to-morrow.

M. de Valbrun, though he pretended not to be jealous, only quitted us at the door of the Count's hotel.

M. de Lignolle was with his wife when we

were announced. The Baroness, in presenting me to the Countess, said, I bring you this young person, in whom you will find all the qualities necessary to the triple charge with which you honoured me. She reads, writes, and talks well. She has the reputation of having studied deeply, but that is her last merit. I know her to have an honourable mind, praiseworthy inclinations, and, above all, talents more solid than are usually found at such a tender age, and with such a pretty face. Do not believe that I exaggerate, Countess; you will soon become the intimate friend of your amiable reader, and you will discover a treasure in her, for the acquisition of which you will thank me. I thank you beforehand, said the Countess; upon your recommendation, I do not hesitate. Many of my friends wish to have companions like her, said the Baroness; but I felt that I ought to give you the preference, and to say the whole truth, she is a present that I wished to make M. de Lignolle.

The Countess renewed her thanks to the Baroness, and said that from this evening then—From this evening, interrupted the Count, wait a little.—Sir, I shall not wait.—But——

No *buts*, sir, I have longed for this companion these three days; and if it is necessary for me to wait longer, I shall fall sick.—The world will think it ridiculous.—What is that to me, sir? —They will blame you, madam, for——I knew very well there would come one of these *fors*, with which you are always teasing me, and which are insupportable to me, particularly when you contradict me, from this evening, sir, mademoiselle.—But madam, I would observe to you.—Oh! how unhappy I am!—I would observe to you that if——

The irritated Countess took a proud attitude, looked at M. de Lignolle with majesty, and with the most imperious air, said to him, I will have it so. Since you take it in that way, madam, answered the Count, it must be so: why did you not explain yourself at once. The Baroness must permit me to examine her protegee a little, for they often talk of deep studies, and God knows what to understand from it. I have seen those little gentlemen that have been praised up as prodigies! They had gained the prize at the university, and could not find the secret of an enigma. Judge, then, what they would have done, if they had been asked to make

one! Mademoiselle I do not doubt that you are well educated, but—your face,—your manners.—What is your name, mademoiselle?—De Brumont, sir.—You are not a philosopher, I hope? —No, sir, I am a virtuous girl.—A fair answer! mademoiselle, superb! superb! you are of a good family, apparently?—Sir I am a gentleman's daughter.—Good! good again! good! I see that we shall sympathise wonderfully. I own to you that you are come here in a particular minute; when they introduced you, I had finished the last verse of my charade—Oh! it is a real charade, this—Listen, I pray you, to my charade, and try to find it out.

It is certain that to find it out, more than common trouble was necessary. The Count was not happy in the art of defining, but in revenge, each expression, thanks to the situation which he gave it, became an enigma. She has guessed it, cried he; a proof that the charade is well made. Baroness, you are right, she is really an astonishing girl! I was very sure, sir, said Madame Fonrose, that you would find her so; but it is particularly in the eyes of the Countess that I would have her show herself. Upon my

honour, an astonishing girl! repeated he; she has guessed my best charade! One, of which the plan only, cost me five days of meditation!—of which I have laboured the style nine days and a half!—Indeed, I have changed the first verse eighteen times.—Yes, eighteen times. I have varied it in my sleep—As Voltaire did, Count.—Ah, Mademoiselle! Voltaire has never made charades, and then he was a philosopher. To return to my work—how do you find it?—Very spirited, sir, and full of charming antitheses.—Of charming—You call antitheses so?—I know very well I can make antitheses—yet I never learnt rhetoric perfectly; but there are things that some people do not want to learn. It is nature which gives antitheses.—Ladies, these are called antitheses.

No, sir, answered the Countess, entirely occupied with what the Baroness said, these are what they call bolsters. How, madam! bolsters?—Yes, sir, these little cushions that we put upon our hips to make our petticoats stick out are called bolsters. Ah, madam, cried he, what an answer! He returns to me: Hold, Mademoiselle Brumont, I do not say that to you, for upon my honour you astonish me; but

women are so trifling with their fiddle-faddles! When you shall have gained the confidence of the Countess, added he in a lower tone, try to give her taste for things of more importance. Instruct her; teach her the great art of charades and antitheses.—Let me alone, Count, if I have only the happiness to please her.—You will please her.—Do you think so?—You will please her; I am sure of it.—Well, I will teach her many things.—Of that I do not doubt, I give you my word, and you will do me a great service, for which I shall be very grateful.—You are too good, sir; another would thank you, but I am tempted to obey your wishes. Elsewhere I have for a time occupied the situation which I am wanted to take in your house, and no husband has desired me to fill any department with respect to his wife which I have not imposed on myself, if the exercise of it was even disagreeable to me. My services to the Countess shall be, as far as concerns you, always disinterested, I swear to you. To return to my work: you find it?—Surprising! of a simplicity!—Sublime! But, sir, how do you make verse?—Easily, interrupted he; my longest verses never take me more than fifteen



days. For the measure, I count it on my fingers; for rhymes, I take Richelet's Dictionary; and the meaning, I wait for three weeks, if necessary; so my verses are very easy.—And your charades have the merit of being made in *bouts-rimés*?\*—Exactly; every poet has his way, and that is mine.—You do not tell me so?—The deuce! it is my secret!—It is badly kept, Count, since all the wits of the day possess it. Read the crowd of their little works, which are born and die every week, under the proudly modest title of my *Whims, Recollections, Essays, Relaxations, Caprices, Leisure Hours, etc.* Read the little familiar songs with which they regale their friends in the gay days of a festival, and which they afterwards address to posterity in those almanacks, presumptuously called poetical, which are bought on New Year's Day and forgot before the middle of January; read the *arriettes* of our grand comic operas, and of our serious operas; read the tender madrigals of our fashionable comedies; read our frightful tragedies; read, M. le

\* Before what you write about is determined, you place final words rhyming with each other, which you fill up as you can.—TR.

Comte, and you will see that they are all nearly after your own manner, and that modern poetry has the advantage of all other, of being made to rhymes chosen beforehand,

I perceived that he began to look serious, and I restored him to good humour by loading him with praises. Then you are really delighted with my charade, and you think that I might sign it without any danger? Most assuredly, monsieur, and you may reckon on the gratitude of the public.

He took the pen and wrote: By M. Jean Baptiste Emanuel Frederic Louis Chrysostome Joseph, Comte de Lignolle, Seigneur de——et du——Lieutenant-Colonel of——regiment, in garrison at——, Chevalier of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis, Paris, etc., etc.

What! monsieur, your names, your titles, and your residence?—It is customary, mademoiselle—there, you will read it in the “Mercury” next week.

The Count, intoxicated with my approbation, told the Baroness that she would see some of his productions in the public papers, and then addressing himself to the Countess, he said: Madam, you may take Mademoiselle de Bru-

mont into your family, for I assure you I am perfectly satisfied with her; she is a girl of rare accomplishments, whose merit you are not yet acquainted with. Monsieur, replied the Countess, I am happy you agree with me, but it was an affair already settled.

M. de Lignolle next turned to me, and in a low tone said: I have something to say to you, Mademoiselle de Brumont.—Speak, monsieur.—I cannot doubt but your morals are good, because you are of noble blood and dislike modern philosophers; but, however prudent a young girl may be, she cannot help hearing and repeating almost every day some tales about gallantry.—Oh, fie, monsieur.—Good; you understand me; I desire, therefore, that you will never enter into such conversations with the Countess.—It will be very difficult to avoid, monsieur, for young women——Yes, yes; they love to talk of a thousand nonsensical things, which serve to corrupt their minds, and give them false ideas of the world, and I beg you, above all things, to avoid it as much as possible.—I will be very candid with you, monsieur, and acknowledge that I cannot answer for——Try, for I have good reasons for ask-

ing you.—I believe so, monsieur.—Besides you will not have much trouble, for the Countess is very reserved on such subjects.—I am not sorry for it.—And then her reading is very select; she has good books on moral subjects, which do not afford much amusement, but are very instructing. No romances, no love stories, for in all those cursed works there is nothing but gallantry and intrigue.—Yes, they are very pernicious.—In my opinion, mademoiselle, love is as bad as philosophy; for, look you, philosophy and love——

The Baroness, who rose at this moment to take her leave, interrupted the Count, and caused me to lose the fine parallel he was about to give me. Mademoiselle, said Madame de Fonrose, in the tone of a protectress, I leave you in a very agreeable house, where all kinds of pleasure await you. Consider that from this moment you belong to Madame de Lignolle, and you will not only execute her commands, but anticipate her wishes. In short, if you have occasion in certain points to disoblige monsieur, it is your first duty to please Madame. I do not think you will find this either a difficult or a disagreeable task, and it will be highly

to your credit to justify the very favourable opinion I have formed of you; endeavour, therefore, to deserve as soon as possible the good will of so charming a mistress; and remember that I yield to her all my right in you.

After having sermonised me in this manner, my august protectress kissed me on the forehead, and retired. As soon as she was gone, I begged the Countess to let me go to bed. M. de Lignolle insisted that I should remain, but a single word from madam closed his mouth. The Countess herself conducted me to my little apartment. It was a kind of closet at one end of her bedroom. The Count bade me good night several times in a very affectionate manner, and Madame de Lignolle, in saluting me on the forehead, said, with great vivacity, good night, Mademoiselle de Brumont, get a good sleep; it is my desire. Do you understand me?

Behold me alone, and with a moment to breathe! I find myself in a safe house, where my enemies are not likely to search for me. For four days, what perils have surrounded me! what adventures, what anxieties, and what pleasures within the last forty-eight hours!—Pleasures! Pleasures! when distant from

Sophia!—Happily, the space which separated us is greatly diminished. More than sixty leagues were between us, but now there is not five hundred yards. The same city, and even the same neighbourhood contains us; we breathe as one may say the same air.—Alas! why can I not instantly join her? and am this night to embrace nothing but her image, in my deceitful dreams, and to bedew my solitary couch once more with my tears! Come, M. de Valbrun, come to-morrow as you have promised me, for if you do not I shall go alone at all hazards to the convent to demand my wife. I shall be intoxicated with the pleasure of seeing her, with the pleasure of recompensing her tender solitude, and of consoling all her griefs.—Yes, I will go, regardless of the danger, and look my enemies in the face.—Yes, I shall be a thousand times too happy in forfeiting my liberty for a few moments of that supreme felicity and rapturous ecstacy I shall enjoy in her presence, nor will I complain of my lot, if they do not arrest me until I return.

Yes, I will go; the Countess shall not restrain me; a little brunette, very pretty, quite young, full of vivacity, but of an imperious temper!

Oh, the little dragon!—Is she witty? Does she love her husband? But what ideas does my ardent imagination continually prompt? Was it then to occupy myself with these trifles that I requested her permission to retire? Oh, my father, rest satisfied in having a son who loves you! it was to occupy himself with you that Faublas left a pretty woman! and Faublas thinks of nothing but the pleasure of at length being able to send you some satisfactory tidings.

I cannot here dispense with inserting the whole of my tender and respectful letter.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—Perhaps at this moment you are accusing me of ingratitude and cruelty. I left you in the asylum you had procured on my account, but you know not the passion that consumed my heart, which you have rendered so susceptible; you know not what an unexpected blow it received from a man who called himself our friend. On leaving you, father, I proposed a speedy return, and then the chagrin which my absence occasioned would soon have been effaced.

“My wife groaned in captivity, like me, bemoaning our separation, and, perhaps, reduced

to all the horrors of despair. It is true that at a distance from you I exist but in part, but I am not able to exist at all a distance from my Sophia.

“ I knew that she was at Paris, and I flew thither; I did not bid you adieu, because you would not have permitted me to brave the dangers of such a journey. None of the evils which I dreaded have happened to me, but I have encountered more than one danger that I did not foresee. I have been in the capital three days, and this is the first moment of liberty I have enjoyed. I consecrate it to him who would be the most dear to me in the world, if my Sophia was not in existence.

“ I intended to return to you, but beg you will come back here, as you have nothing to fear in Paris, but the dangers which menace me, and I shall shortly be free from alarm. I have already made powerful friends, which, united with yours, will, I hope, be able to hush up this unfortunate affair. Beside, I expect, in about three days, to take refuge in a place of safety. Return here, I pray you. Oh, how happy will be the day for me when I embrace my much-loved father.



“While I am waiting for that happiness, deign to write me a few lines, to ease my anxious mind. Address to the widow Grandval, at the Convent in——Street, fauxbourg Saint Germaine. Imagine what will be my joy; your letter will find me under the same roof with Sophia. Therefore, let me again intreat of you to write immediately.

“I am, with profound respect,

“Yours, etc.

“FAUBLAS.”

“P.S. I have not yet been able to see my dear Adelaide; but I shall send to her convent as soon as it is in my power.”

Now that I have sealed this letter, and directed it to M. de Belcourt, it may be permitted me to examine my little apartment. This door goes into the Countess's bed-room; the other to a private stair-case, which leads down into the court. My little chamber is certainly very convenient. If during the night it should take my fancy to visit Madame de Lignolle! How came that idea into my mind? Be tranquil, my Sophia. I wonder if she sleeps with Monsieur de Lignolle? What matters it? What

interest is it to me? It is but simple curiosity; but it torments me, nevertheless, and I would know if they sleep separate. I see but one bed in the room: how shall I ascertain? Zounds, I will wait awhile, and look through the key-hole! Good! it is but seven o'clock, they will not sup before ten, they will not retire before twelve; and I must wait five hours by the clock? I shall die with fatigue. No; my charming wife, I will occupy my mind with nothing but you; and as a proof of it, I will now go to bed.

I did so instantly, and slept so well, that Madame de Lignolle was obliged to call me the next morning to assist her in dressing.

Have you passed the night, Mademoiselle de Brumont? said she, with great cheerfulness.—Very well, indeed; and madam?—I have slept very bad.—Your eyes are nevertheless very bright and your complexion fresh, madam.—But I can assure you I have not slept well, said she, smiling.—It is perhaps the fault of Monsieur the Count.—How so? answer me, mademoiselle, why you think so.—Madam——Explain yourself? I must know.—I beg you will excuse me, madam; I have perhaps displeased

you with this pleasantry, though I meant no harm.—Not at all, but I do not understand it; therefore explain it, and make haste, for I do not like to wait.—Madam——Mademoiselle, you put me out of patience. Speak, I will have it.—Madam, I will obey you. It is true that the Count is nearly fifty, but madam is, I understand, very young?—I am sixteen.—It is true that the Count appears to have very indifferent health; but madam is pretty.—Without flattery, do you think so?—I feel confident I tell you no more than you are accustomed to hear.—You are very polite, Mademoiselle de Brumont, but let us return to what you were speaking about.—Most willingly. It is true that the Count is the husband of madam; I think it is not long that madam has been a wife.—About two months.—I concluded from that, that M. de Lignolle, still amorous of his spouse, had——Well! what has he?—Paid a visit to madam during the night.—No, monsieur never comes to me during the night.—Perhaps then you were together late in the evening, and the Count was teasing you?—Teasing me! and for what?—When I said teasing, I only meant such caresses as are permitted

between husband and wife.—What, is that all? And do you think I could not sleep soundly during the night because in the evening my husband had kissed me five or six times? I know not what madness possesses the world, but they are all talking to me in this singular manner!

Having said this, the Countess went with her *fille de chambre* into her dressing-room, and told me she would soon return. Left alone, I began to reflect on the conversation which had passed between us. The woman astonishes me! but perhaps she amuses herself at my expense! But no; she must have spoken seriously, for she had such an air of innocence, and such a look of candour. Yet, it is possible that a young woman, married two months, should pique herself on being as ignorant of certain things as she was two months previously! My hint was so plain! why then so obstinately pretend not to understand me? Is it a polite manner she has adopted of repulsing a joke which does not please her? I doubt it. Imperious and lively as she is, she might easily have told me it displeased her; but, on the contrary, she insisted on an explanation, which was very diffi-



*Madame de Lignolle, prompt in keeping her word with me, returned soon after in a very simple but elegant dishabille.*

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cult for me to give, and which, after all, she affected not to take in the true sense, and then made this equivocal reply: "What, do you think that I should not sleep soundly during the night, merely because my husband may have embraced me five or six times in the course of the evening before?"—Upon my honour, madam, I am astonished at you, and confess myself at a loss to reconcile your new married state to your virgin airs and your conversation, either too innocent or too free.

Madame de Lignolle, prompt in keeping her word with me, returned soon after, in a very simple but elegant dishabille. She passed into her boudoir, where she begged me to follow her, and ordered chocolate. We were just going to breakfast, when M. de Lignolle ran into the room in a great rage, exclaiming: No, no, I will not pardon it, I will be forever inexorable. Good God! what is the matter with you? said the Countess; I never saw you in such a passion before.—A most frightful circumstance, madam!—What?—You slept tranquil this night, and a seducer was near you.—You dream of nothing but seducers, monsieur; but tell me what all this noise is about?—I discovered it

by mere accident.—But the accident has discovered nothing to me.—The wretch would have ravished your honour.—What should I have suffered?—Never trust any more in those who call themselves your friends. They are only pretended friends who have given it you.—What! What is it—Who have answered for——Monsieur——The prudence——Will you explain——Of their conduct.—I shall lose my patience!

The Count, whose motions I observed, far from addressing any of these injurious apostrophes to me, did not even look at me, and perhaps knew not that I was present. Nevertheless, some of his disagreeable reflections seemed so applicable to my present situation, that I was far from being at ease.

Madame de Lignolle, burning with impatience, rose hastily, seized her husband by the collar, shook him with great violence, and said to him: You have put me beside myself, monsieur! You have sported with my curiosity so long, I cannot bear it.—Explain yourself, I insist on it.—Well, madam, you shall hear it all. I know not by what secret inspiration I was prompted to go just now into your anti-

chamber and discovered a pamphlet lying open, I approached it, I read, and horrible to tell, madam, I found it to be the most dangerous, the most abominable of books! a philosophical work!—Ah, let us see it—“*Le Discours sur l’Origine de l’Inégalité parmi les Hommes.*”\*

Being now satisfied on my own account, I ventured to interrupt M. de Lignolle, and to ask him what this treatise on the inequality of men had to do with the honour of women.—Yes, yes, cried the Countess, inform us if you please. What it has to do with it, madam, replied the Count with a great deal of warmth, do you not perceive it? What! a philosophical work read publicly in your house! all your servants become philosophers and you not tremble at the consequences? What harm could that produce, monsieur?—Every species of mischief, madam. As soon as a servant becomes a philosopher he corrupts all his companions, robs his master and seduces his mistress.—Seduce! it is always seduction with you, monsieur, and why? I shall make a clear house in the anti-chamber—What! will you turn away all our servants?

\* An Essay on the Origin of the Inequality among Mankind.

—Yes, madam.—I do not understand that, monsieur. If any one of them is in fault, I consent to your discharging him.—I'll send them all away madam.—No, monsieur.—They are all contaminated; it requires but half an hour for a philosopher to corrupt them.—I wish, monsieur, you would cease to stun me thus.—Yes! I confess that when I see in the hands of my servants, “The Philosophical Thoughts,” or “The Philosophical Dictionary,” or “The Discourse concerning a Happy Life,” or the “Essay on the Origin of the Inequality amongst Mankind,” etc., I am very much alarmed, and I think nothing safe in my house.

In the meantime the Countess, furious to see, though undoubtedly for the first time, that M. de Lignolle had dared to disobey her, ran and threw herself into an arm chair; there giving way to the violence of her passion, she struck the ground with her feet, bit her hands, and continued to rave like a mad woman. Insensible to her comic despair, the comic enemy of philosophers proceeds with the following rhapsody:

How many wretches of this class have been perverted by the philosophy of the age! It has produced more crimes and suicides of every

kind, than were ever caused to be committed by misfortune and misery. I might, perhaps, while condemning his opinions and lamenting his errors, become the friend of a man who was a partisan of this false philosophy: but nothing shall induce me to keep servants who are philosophers.

Monsieur, exclaimed the Countess with much fierceness, you shall keep them notwithstanding, for it is my pleasure. At this decisive word the good husband forgets his anger, and replies with great moderation: since it is your pleasure, madam, it must also be mine, but at least permit me to make a few observations.—I hope you will excuse me, monsieur, interrupted she, and I repeat it that it is my pleasure. Very well madam, said he, holding down his head, very well, it shall be so, but you will see, you will see the consequences. Your servants will give you lessons enough; there is not one, I am sure, who is not a philosopher at heart; consequently they will become drunken, insolent and careless. Your groom will lame your horses; your coachman will overturn his passengers; your cook will spoil the sauces; your major domo will destroy your linen and your clothes, your

housemaids will break your furniture, your stewards will rob you, your *fille de chambre* will betray your secrets and calumniate you, and your lady's-maid will become pregnant in your house.

He left us, and did well in so doing for I should have been sorry to have burst into a fit of laughter before him. Whilst he was thus depicting to us future evils, a real evil happened to us; the chocolate had become cold. Judge my mortification when the Countess talked of sending it back, for I had but a poor dinner the day before, and went to bed without my supper. I trembled lest the chocolate should not come back again, and therefore proposed to warm it by the fire of the Boudoir. A good idea, said the Countess, and in the meantime I will write a letter.

This letter was to a dear aunt who had brought her up from her infancy. We wrote about thirty lines of respectful compliments, to which we added twenty lines of tender recollections, and about twenty-five lines more of childish secrets. I thought I should never have finished. Mortified at the idea of beginning the fourth page of this epistle, I took the liberty

of informing the Countess, that the chocolate must be warm, I believe it, answered she, but let us finish the letter first.

I may as well tell you everything which augmented the embarrassment of my situation, which was truly grievous. A wretched *fille de chambre* whom I could not look at a second time on account of her ugliness, kept loitering about the fire-place. There was a something philosophical about this girl, which made me tremble for my breakfast; a secret presentiment seemed to warn me, that her awkwardness would prove fatal to me, and her continual motion gave me continual distractions.

Madame Lignolle, whose letter did not advance very fast, perceived several times my badly disguised anxiety and restlessness, and at length, asked me with warmth if anything troubled me. At the very moment when the impatient mistress put this question to me, the clumsy blundering Abigail in brushing the hearth, rolled the chocolate pot in the ashes. I perceived the disaster; the pen fell from my hands, my eyes were lifted up to heaven, my head thrown backward by means of a convulsive motion, and I nearly fell over on the floor.

Ah! madam, cried I, the chocolate! the chocolate! but the Countess, after turning her eye first towards the chimney, and then towards me, with the greatest serenity, parodied the words of a hero, by saying: "Well, mademoiselle, and what has the chocolate to do with the letter you are writing."\*

Carried away by my despair, I replied in rather an indifferent manner. She then addressed the servant, and told her to take it to the kitchen, and order some more to be sent up. This generous order administered the balm of consolation to the very bottom of my soul; I felt my strength revive, my ideas brighten up, and my style become animated; and Madame de Lignolle assisting me, I concluded by saying an infinity of pretty things to her dear aunt.

The letter being finished, I closed the secretaire, and the breakfast once more made its appearance. They brought a little table, two cups are set, the refreshing beverage is poured out, the Countess came to sit down, I took my

\* Every one knows this remark of Charles XII. to one of his secretaries: "Well, what has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating to you."



place opposite her, and I thought the happy moment was come!—But, oh, a misfortune more insupportable than the first! An unhappy footman brings a letter; the Countess noticed the post-mark. Besancon! exclaims she, and uttering a cry of joy, rose up precipitately. She struck her two thighs against the table, which was very light, and rolled it with what was on it into my lap.

I made a dreadful cry, but it did not proceed from any injury I received on the occasion, nor because the table was broken, the china scattered, the chocolate pot bruised, and my best petticoat spoiled! No! I thought of nothing but the chocolate, now running in floods upon the carpet.

While I remained motionless, the Countess, in a stooping attitude, with her eyes fixed on the much prized paper, her hands trembling, and her voice faltering, read:

“You may conceive, my dear niece, that after having experienced so much pleasure in educating you, how much I was hurt at not being able to attend at your marriage: but the Parliament of Besancon have at length had a sitting; I have gained my lawsuit, and shall

be with you as soon as my letter, viz., on the 15th instant."

The 15th, that is to-day, cried the Countess, kissing the paper; oh, what good news! Oh, my dear aunt, I shall see you once more! Oh, how delighted I shall be! At this moment I perceived a remnant of the breakfast under a table. I darted forward, seized it, and kissed it, crying: Oh, precious little loaf, I am enchanted at having found you. I sat down in a corner to devour my insufficient prey, while Madame de Lignolle, by turns reading and kissing her letter, cut capers from one end of the dressing-room to the other.

At length she rang for the footman: Saint-Jean, tell the porter that I am at home to-day to no one but the Marchioness d'Armincourt. Mademoiselle Brumont, I disturbed you early this morning, but you may now dispose of your forenoon as you please. I made the Countess a profound reverence, and withdrew to shut myself up in my little apartment. The reader knows nearly all I could say to my sister Adelaide, to whom I wrote.

As I sealed my letter, the ugly *femme de chambre* came to dress my hair, by order of her

mistress. I cursed her frightful face to myself, for spoiling my breakfast. You can easily conceive that, being naturally polite, I did not let her hear what I said. You will guess perhaps that during the operation which now took place, I yielded my head to her hands and shut my eyes.

I must, however, do justice to poor Jeanette, for though unfavoured by nature, she was endowed by art. She could dress with great taste, and handled her comb with wonderful dexterity. But how many acquired talents are necessary to counterbalance one natural gift? How much at this moment did I regret my little Justine!

When Jeanette had finished her task I did not retain her. Had it been Justine she would have remained without my asking her; at first perhaps she might have delayed my toilette, but with what promptitude should we have made up for lost time! I was now obliged to undertake the painful task of dressing myself as a woman from head to foot, which I at last accomplished, after having spent more time than an idle young girl, on a cold winter's morning, when she is going, against her will, to hear

mass at a country church, with her grandmother.

In the meantime the clock struck three, and the Marchioness arrived. M. de Lignolle, apparently still in dudgeon, informed us that he would dine in the city. A servant announced that dinner was ready. At table the young Countess overwhelmed me with compliments. Their questions, sometimes embarrassing—my answers, sometime equivocal—their credulity—my confidence—the praises with which I repaid their eulogiums—all ought, perhaps, to be related; but I feel matter of a more interesting nature pressing upon me.

Oh, Muse of History! astonishing virgin! who has been so often violated? Eloquent and truth-speaking goddess, who is made to lie with so little address! Maiden, respectable and wise! by whom so many impertinent follies are transmitted to us! august Clio, it is you I invoke! Since you know everything, I have no occasion to tell you that of all the adventures which have amused my ardent youth, the one I am going to relate is not the least foolish; and the gallant recital I am about to make gives me real uneasiness. Where, at the same time, shall I find

the gauze, decently to veil it, that the truth may not be left quite naked? I shall hurt the least delicate ear if I use the proper language; and if I soften it down I shall render it unnatural. How then, without outraging any one's modesty, can I satisfy the curiosity of all the world? Oh, chaste goddess, cast a look of pity upon the most embarrassed of your servants! descend from heaven to his relief; enter his chamber, and guide the pen he is now mending.

Very well, my child, said Madame d'Arincourt to Madame de Lignolle, but, at present, let us be free; let us speak seriously. Are you satisfied with your husband?—Why?—yes, Madame la Marchioness, replied she.—Why do you call me Madame la Marchioness? Do you think I shall always call you Madame la Countess? It is right to be sure when persons are present; but between ourselves it is nonsense! You are a child whom I have reared, therefore call me aunt, and I will call you niece. Tell me candidly, shall you soon present me with a little nephew?—I do not know, my dear aunt.—That is to say, you are not certain?—I do not know.—Have you not perceived any changes in your health?—heim?—Plaît-il,

ma tante?—Tu n'as pas eu quelques absences? —Des absences! est-ce que j'étais sujette à avoir des absences.—Non pas quand tu étais fille; mais depuis que tu es femme?—Hé bien! les femmes deviennent-elles folles?—Folles! il est bien question ne folié! cela ne porte pas au cerveau, dans ce cas-là, ma nièce.—Que me demandez vous donc, ma tante?—je demande —je demande—pourquoi donc affecter? Mademoiselle de Brumont ne doit pas te gêner, elle est ton aînée; une fille de vingt ans, quoiqu'elle soit sage, n'ignore plus certaines choses.—Je de vous comprends pas, ma tante.—Ma nièce, trouvez-vous mes questions indiscrètes?—Non, sûrement; parlez, ma tante, parlez.—Ecoute, mon enfant, si je m'en mêle, c'est par intérêt pour toi. D'abord, si l'on m'avait crue, tu n'aurais pas épousé M. de Lignolle; je le trouvais trop vieux. Un homme de cinquante ans—Je sais bien qu'à cet âge là, M. d'Armincour était un pauvre sire—mais enfin on prétend qu'il y en a—Dis-moi, le comte remplit-il son devoir?—Oh, M. de Lignolle fait tout ce que veux.—Tout ce que tu veux!—et tous les jours?—Tous les jours.—Je t'en félicite, ma nièce, tu es forte heureuse—Ah cà, mais pour-

tant, me petite, il faut prendre garde.—À quoi, ma tante?—Il faut ménager ton mari.—Comment?—Comment, ma nièce. Il ne faut pas vouloir trop souvent——Vouloir quoi? ma tante.—Ce dont il est question, ma nièce.—Mais il ne semble qu'il n'est question de rien, ma tante,—De rien! tu appelles cela rien, toi! tu ne sais donc pas qu'à l'âge de M. de Lignolle, aller ce train-la, c'est s'épuiser.—S'épuiser!—Sans doute. Il y a des fatigues que les femmes supportent, mais auxquelles les hommes ne résistent pas.—Des fatigues?—Assurément, et puis vos âges sont très-différens, ma nièce.—Mais que fait l'âge?—Cela fait tout, ma petite, et ne va pas tuer ton mari. Tuer ton mari!—Oui, le tuer, mon enfant; i'l n'est pas rare de voir des hommes en mourir.—Mourir de quoi, ma tante?—De cela, ma nièce.—De cela! de faire les volontés de leurs femmes!—Oui, ma nièce, quand les volontés de leurs femmes sont infinies.—Eh bien! M. de Lignolle ne s'en porte pas plus mal.—Tant mieux, ma nièce; mais, je vous le répète, prenez-y garde, parce que cela ne durerait pas.—Je voudrais bien voir!—Vous riez, ma tante?—Oui, je ris, avec ton *je voudrais bien voir!* Que ferais tu, je

t'en prie ?—Ce que je ferais ! je lui dirais que je le veux.—Ah ! voilà du nouveau !—Vous croyez que je n'oserais pas ! Cela m'est arrivé déjà plus d'une fois.—Et cela t'a réussi ?—Certainement. Quand M. de Lignolle hésite, je me fâche.—Ah ! ah !—Quand il refuse, je commande.—Et il obéit ?—Il murmure, mais il s'en va.—Mais, s'il s'en va, il ne fait donc pas ce que tu veux ?—Pardonnez-moi, ma tante.—Il revient donc ?—Il revient ou ne revient pas, que m'importe ?—Comment !—Pourvu qu'il obéisse——Mais——Et que je sois la maîtresse——Mais——De faire tout ce qui me plait.—Ah ca, ma nièce, il y a donc une demi-heure que nous nous parlons sans nous entendre ? Savez-vous bien que cela m'impac-  
tiente ?—Comment, ma tante.—Eh oui, ma nièce, je vous dis blanc, vous me répondez noir ; il semble que je vous parle hébreu.—Ce n'est pas ma faute.—Est-ce la mienne ? Je vous fais la question la plus simple, et vous paraissez ne pas comprendre !—Quand je parle des devoirs de M. de Lignolle, j'intends ses devoirs de mari.—Fort bien, ma tante.—Et quand vous me répondez qu'il fait vos volontés, je crois que vous voulez dire vos volontés de femme——Juste-



ment, ma tante.—De femme mariée.—Sans doute, ma tante.—D'une femme jeune, vive, et qui aime le plaisir.—Précisément, ma tante.—Ainsi, vous m'entendiez?—Oui, ma tante.—Et vous répondiez à ce que je vous demandais?—Oui, ma tante.—Vous répondiez que M. de Lignolle remplissait son devoir de mari?—Oui, ma tante.—Tous le jours?—Oui, ma tante.—Eh bien, ma nièce, je trouve cela fort étonnant et fort heureux.—But, my dear child, I shall repeat it over again, you must listen to reason; your husband is no longer young, and you will be the death of him.—That is what I do not comprehend, aunt.—How so! don't you comprehend that a man who is fifty years of age cannot, without endangering his life, gratify a young wife whose appetite is immoderate?—Appetite, aunt, is quite out of the question.—Well, then, I shall say desires, if you will have it so.—But who told you that my desires were immoderate?—Yourself, niece, since you pretend to keep the command in that particular.—Well, aunt?—And that you compel your husband to act foolishly every day.—Indeed, madam, you are quite out of temper to-day.—You resemble all other young wives when

they are contradicted upon this point.—Would you wish then——They think of nothing else in the world.—Would you wish, I say,——That is always for them the *summum bonum*.—Do you wish to oblige me to clear the place?—I confess that it is one of the greatest gratifications this life can afford.—Oh! how my patience is worn out!—Go on, go on, I am well aware of your being of a petulant disposition, but I am your parent, and you must listen to me.—Great God!—You shall not take yourself off, stop here, and listen to what I have to say; I insist upon your promising not to compel Monsieur de Lignolle daily to obey what you term your will.—Tell me, pray, madam, wherefore should I suffer myself to be governed one day in preference to another?—What a fine reasoning!—Why should I not do this day what I have achieved yesterday?—But according to you pleasant calculation, there would be no reason why it should not last forever.—I understand it so, and I expect there will be no end to it.—What queer answers she returns!—You may say whatever you please, aunt, I will not suffer my husband to offend me.—She must be crack-brained!—Not to rule me!—What non-

sense!—I do not prevent his acting as he pleases—She is not in her proper senses—But let him allow me to do whatever I like—Allow you? that cannot be. It is only with her husband that a modest woman——With him when it suits me; with another if it suit me better.—For shame, niece, what principles!—The main object is, that I wish to be left entirely at liberty.—Indeed, I don't comprehend your meaning.—And that in every respect, I be left to act as I please.—So then, madam, you wish me to be gone.—It is you, madam, who wish me to leave the room?—How provoking!—I can't put up with her language!—Act according to my advice, my dear niece.—Speak reason to me then, my dear aunt, I am no longer a child.

They both had left their seats, and were equally irritated. However, to the very plain questions of the old lady, her niece, with as much innocence as truth, had returned answers at once so candid, so ambiguous, and so extraordinary that I began to suspect strange things. I endeavoured to pacify Madame d'Armincourt by saying: there is every reason to believe, madam, that my lady Countess is

not extremely happy in the particular case you mean her to understand. I would even venture to lay any wager that she is as far from deserving as from comprehending the sense of your reproaches.—Do you think so? If that be the case, do you put questions to her, Mademoiselle de Brumont, and let us try whether she can be made to return plain, satisfactory answers. I then addressed the niece: Will my lady Countess allow me——She did not give me time to proceed, but instantly replied: Most willingly, mademoiselle.

Does M. de Lignolle sleep in my lady Countess's chamber?—No.—Never?—Never. Does he go there in the course of the night?—Never.—He, perhaps, postpones going till the morning?—Yes, when I am up.—Does he ever, in the course of the day, lock himself up with your ladyship?—No.—Does he remain with you, madam, to a late hour in the evening?—When our supper is over, he will stop at most five minutes.—How does he spend those five minutes, pray?—In wishing me good night.—How does he wish your ladyship good night?—He kisses me.—In what manner does he kiss you?—As people generally do kiss.—Where

are his kisses applied?—Where kisses are in common, I suppose.—I would wish to know?—On my forehead, my eyes, my chin.—Is that all?—That is all.—Exactly so?—Exactly so. What would you wish for more?—Well, now, my lady Marchioness, what do you think of that?

She replied: I think it would be very incredible, and very shocking!—She immediately ran up to Madame de Lignolle, saying: tell me, niece, are you a wife or a maiden?—A wife, since I have got a husband.—Have you got a husband?—Certainly, since M. de Lignolle has married me.—But, are you sure that he has married you?—Can you doubt it!—Where did he marry you?—At church.—No where else? Are people ever married elsewhere?—Tell me, child, on your wedding day—indeed, I am very sorry I had it not in my power to come to Paris on your wedding day, I was on my guard against this Monsieur de Lignolle, this amiable gentleman of fifty, who seemed to me to exhibit no traces of intellect in his countenance: but I had expressly recommended that you should be provided with the necessary preliminary instructions. Then, tell me, my dear

child, what happened to you on the wedding night?—Nothing, my dear aunt.—Nothing. Mademoiselle de Brumont? Is it possible that the nuptial night had no incidents? Unhappy creature! added the good-natured aunt, with a flood of tears, how I pity your case! But give me an explicit answer, did not your husband go to bed to you, as is usual upon such occasions? He did, aunt.—Well, and what did he do afterwards?—Why——he wished me a good night, and then went away.—What! go and leave you on such an occasion? exclaimed the Marchioness, in tears. Ah, my charming little niece! your youth and beauty merited not such treatment!—My dear aunt, how you distress me.—Unhappy child! you are still a virgin, even after a two months' marriage! What a strange and wretched destiny is yours!—But pray explain yourself, my dear aunt, you terrify me with your apprehensions.—I really cannot, my dear child, my grief suffocates me, and deprives me of utterance. Do you, Mademoiselle de Brumont, who express yourself with so much ease and perspicuity, do you explain the matter to my young friend. You are not ignorant on these subjects, I presume. You

certainly must know a something.—Oh, my lady Marchioness, I have heard some conversations on the matter, and have read some instructive books.—Then let me request you to instruct my niece. I authorise you so to do, and your compliance will confer an obligation on me.

I did not require the request to be repeated. I gave a full explanation, because she was ignorant of the matter; but, as for you, courteous reader, the intelligence would be no novelty.

A strange business! rejoined Madame de Lignolle, astonished at the declaration she had heard; but are you really serious, or are you only joking?—I would take no such liberty with you, my lady Countess, replied I.—But pray, my dear aunt, is everything that Mademoiselle de Brumont tells me exact and true?—Undoubtedly, my dear niece, she has fully explained the whole business to you, as if it had been the study of her life.—But really, ought M. le Comte to behave to me in such a manner, after being married to him two months?—Oh, my dear niece! M. le Comte has insulted you! Yes, he has insulted you, and are you not

sensible of the insult?—My dear aunt, I own that he has been tardy, but is that an insult?—It is, my dear niece, a flagrant insult. To neglect your charms, and set them at nought, is the most studied affront, since it intimates that your beauty is not worthy of homage. To leave you to linger, like an antiquated virgin, is acting in the most unfeeling manner, and telling you, in rather plain words, that the sweet blossom upon your charms is not worthy of the gatherer's hand. This, my dear, is the last humiliation to which a woman of spirit can be subjected, and I am sorry to say, that it is now your lot.—But is it possible, my dear aunt?—Undoubtedly so.—To desert you thus, in your maiden state, amounts to a declaration on his part, that he thinks you odious, uninteresting and disgusting.—Oh, heavens! my dear aunt, do you not exaggerate?—Ask *Mademoiselle de Brumont* if I do.

Upon this, I ventured a remark: and, addressing myself to the young lady who was treated in this unusual manner, I took the liberty to suggest to her, that *M. le Comte*, by his mode of proceeding, seemed to imply that she was ugly.



*There also he is mistaken, as you see—I have no shoe on.—*

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There also he is mistaken, as you see - I have no such





Ugly! replied she: not so; I do not hide my face, and as for my shape, it is visible, and is not amiss.—Perhaps he thinks your arms are not well turned?—Again I say, it is not so!—I shall take off my glove—But he may find fault with the shape of your foot?—There also he is mistaken, as you see—I have no shoe on.—He may imagine that your bosom is not prominent; your skin coarse, and your legs ill-shaped? To all these insinuations, she replied in the most decisive manner, and presented palpable evidence of a contrary supposition.

The frank and guardless manner of the young Countess, and the warmth with which she resented the criminal coldness and indifference of her husband, induced me to engage more deeply in the conversation.

Being anxious to see how far her passions might lead her, in gratifying her resentment, I hinted that there might be some secret deformity in her person. Upon this, she discovered, by an expressive gesture, a motion as quick as thought, that she was ready to contradict the injurious supposition in the most unqualified manner, and treat it as a falsehood of the vilest stamp. But Madame d'Armincours,

quickly perceiving the intention of the Countess, unfortunately for me, prevented its immediate execution.—My dear friend, said she to her niece, the matter is beneath your attention. I have never lost sight of you since your childhood. I know that nothing is amiss, and Mademoiselle de Brumont may rely on your word. Besides, it is not worth your while to be angry. —What! not angry, when my husband tells an atrocious untruth?—Perhaps he is not so much to blame.—He is an insolent wretch and a base character.—Perhaps, niece, he has been ill some time?—Not for the last two months.—But, perhaps, he has met with some family misfortune. —None, whatsoever, for he was quite happy when he received me in marriage.—It may be that some great calamity has taken place.—Yes, the progress of philosophy——Perhaps he is engaged in some work of deep meditation. —O, yes, the composition of charades. But, my dear aunt, cease to take his part, for if you do, you will irritate me beyond all patience. I am now fully sensible of the vileness of his conduct, and as soon as he comes home, depend upon it, he shall give me an explanation, he shall fully apologise to me for his strange

behaviour; he must marry me on the spot, or we shall see.

In the meantime, the day began to draw towards a close; and it was not without some difficulty that I obtained a moment of liberty from the Countess. I retired, however, to my apartment, and shortly after M. de Valbrun made his appearance. The Vicomte informed me, that a confidential person was dispatched to the hotel de B— to deliver the letter from Justine into the hands of the Marchioness de B—. The answer was to this effect; she who sends you does me a great favour, I was rather uneasy about the person concerning whom she gives me information. Pray tell her to give me every information about the state of her affairs, as I am deeply interested in her favour. You may add, that M. de B—, who at first treated me rather coldly, has now acknowledged his error, and has received forgiveness. This is no secret, it may be communicated to those who may feel pleasure in my happiness.

M. de Valbrun then informed me that Madame de Fonrose was gone to the convent of Madame de Faublas. To-morrow morning, said he, before eight o'clock, I will communi-

cate to you what we have done. After thanking the Vicomte in a proper manner, I put into his hands two letters; one of which I begged him to convey to the convent of Adelaide, and to put the other in the general post. As he left me, he gave me every assurance that he was going instantly to execute both these commissions. Oh! fatal letter to M. de Belcour! ought I not to have had presentiment of all the uneasiness which thou wast likely to produce! But at the present moment, I may naturally ask why Mademoiselle de Brumont, having no other project in her head, than that of meeting with Sophia, felt, nevertheless, some displeasure at finding the old Marchioness, when she repaired to the apartment of the young Countess? But this emotion, doubtless, like many others of a similar stamp, arose from the circumstance that the Chevalier de Faublas, being summoned by love to atone for the endless injuries that matrimony continually inflicts on suffering beauty, felt himself invisibly attracted, while he only obeyed the impulse of his own imagination. I may ask, also, why the niece received the instructions of the aunt with listlessness and inattention, and fixing



upon me, at intervals, glances that penetrated my inmost frame, did not show any strong desire to detain Madame d'Arminecour for the rest of the evening, however highly she might esteem her in other respects. It was because, whatever the unfeeling philosophers of these modern times may assert, those sympathetic atoms, which they reject, issuing forth from the glowing person of a lively youth, and at the same moment, proceeding from the connubial charms of a young and interesting bride, approximate and coalesce to form their two persons into one. The lovely and gentle brunette, already felt this soft sway, and was sensible of the presence of an engaging young man; she was already guided by the powerful rays of that beneficent light, which I kindled in her eyes; and by that instinct which is so natural to the female sex, and which leads them to a decision in a way the most delicate, prompt and efficacious. Thus it is, certain subjects, and, in certain cases, a quickness of apprehension rule the female soul in a way superior to the laboured deductions of reason. Madame de Lignolle felt undisguised contempt for the insignificance of a man who failed in his duty

to her, both day and night; and, as it were mechanically, perceived in me one who could punish the offence, and satisfy the offended party. I might ask, why Madame d'Armincours, though favoured with long experience, never perceived that her presence was not desirable, and in spite of the ennui of her niece, kept her company till the return of M. de Lignolle. But these antiquated personages are doomed eternally to mar the enjoyment of the young, in order, perhaps, to render their pleasures poignant by means of obstacles and interruptions, and thus secure to them more satisfaction from ultimate success. I do not desire however, to deliver my oracles of wisdom, or hold forth maxims of infallible truth, neither do I desire a blind submission to my precepts of morality. Often have I observed, that when woman enters into my thoughts, she introduces confusion into my imagination, and destroys the web of my arguments and calculations; hence it follows that when I wish to moralise, I deviate into pleasantry, and when I am eager to philosophise, I deliver a string of paradoxes.

At all events Madame d'Armincours favoured

us with her company at supper. She spoke incessantly about the province of—, where she brought up her niece; of her chateau which required to be repaired only once every year; of the keeper of the chateau, who performed the duty of her agent, whom she described as a most important individual; and whom she might be supposed to know best, without offending any other person. The conversation about this good André might have been prolonged till the next morning, but a little after midnight the Count's carriage was heard in the court.

“A most disagreeable accident has befallen me,” cried M. de Lignolle, as he entered the apartment; “you know the beautiful charade that I have composed—This, sir, is the Marchioness d’Arminecour,” said the Countess, interrupting him; “this is my aunt.” The Count, being thus taken by surprise, commenced a long complimentary speech to the Marchioness, which she had not the patience to hear to the end. “Good night,” said she abruptly to the Countess; “good night, my dear Eleanor.\* To-morrow I will come at an early hour, and I hope I shall have

\* That was the Christian name of the Countess.

the honour of saluting the Countess de Lignolle. Farewell, sir, said she, dryly, to M. de Lignolle, making a cold and distant curtsey, such as females usually reserve for men whom they disregard. You know my beautiful charade, repeated the Count, as soon as she was gone. Mademoiselle de Brumont, interrupted the Countess, please to retire to your apartment.\*

I complied without hesitation, but contrived to keep close to the door, and listen with the most profound attention.

M. de Lignolle began to repeat his observation about the charade, when his lady interrupted him by observing that it was not his duty to make charades, now that he was a married man, but to get children. What, madam! cried he, with surprise.—Why, sir, replied she, is it my duty to tell you what a husband ought to do? If my aunt and Mademoiselle de Brumont had not informed me, I must have still been ignorant of these matters. My dear lady, replied he, you quite misunderstand me; I know my duty as well as any other man. If so, replied she, why do you not perform it? Perhaps you consider me to be ugly. During the last two months you have treated me with

every degree of contempt. But why are you going to withdraw, sir? <sup>11</sup>

On repeating these words Madame de Lignolle ran to the door, and secured it against his exit.

You must not quit this apartment, sir, until you have amply atoned to me for your insulting behaviour.—Insulting behaviour! madam.—  
 Yes, sir, I repeat the words; you have insulted me by not completing the marriage; you must perform your duty; I insist upon its immediate performance. <sup>12</sup> If everything is correct, what I have heard is not a very unpleasing task; besides, it is your duty, and whether it is agreeable to you or not it must be performed. I insist upon its complete execution. <sup>13</sup> But, madam——No buts, if you please, sir—it is the height of impertinence. Do you imagine that I am beneath your notice; that you have obtained a young and beautiful bride only to compose charades for her amusement? Vous me ferez un enfant, monsieur—Vous m'en ferez un! vous me le ferez! vous me le ferez tout-à-l'heure! — tout-à-l'heure! — ici —là — a cette place là! <sup>14</sup>

After this animated apostrophe, the Countess

took her frightened admirer by the hand, and conducted him behind the curtains. I beheld the scene through the keyhole by the light of a glimmering lamp; I beheld quattro piedi gropati: La loro positura, che non era più dubbia, mi dava ben' a conoscere che 'l Lignolo otteneva, od era sul punto d'ottonere il perdono delle sue colpe.

What a strange character had I to sustain during this melodrama! The part of a spectator in such a case is most painful and mortifying, when he himself desires to be acting upon the stage. Ah! cursed and curious creature, why did you not retire long before this critical moment? But what can you say for yourself, M. le Chevalier? Do you despair of your good fortune? Take courage, my good friend, your kind destiny still awaits you. Faublas is not doomed to act a secondary part in such an affair of gallantry. Listen to what the Countess has to say, and jump for joy.

Excuse me, sir; perhaps I am in the wrong; perhaps my aunt, as well as Mademoiselle de Brumont, have only wished to have a little pleasantry at my expense. I was on the point of asking you to pass the whole night with me;

but I perceive you would only take useless pains, and your best mode of proceeding is to retire to your own apartment.—Madam, I beg your pardon; perhaps another time I shall be more successful.—Another time! sir, wait till I ask.—Madam, I rely on your discretion.—I make no promises, sir; I only request you to leave me alone.—As soon as he returned from her apartment, she came and opened the door, which he had shut. I instantly ran from my apartment, and repaired to hers.—Madam, indeed, I am delighted.—But why this foolish joy? interrupted she.—You can scarcely conceive, madam.—Mademoiselle de Brumont, said she, in a most serious and solemn tone, if you had a correct notion of what sort of a man M. de Lignolle is, you would know that between him and me nothing has passed exciting joy and pleasure.—What, no pleasure, madam, cried I, but what would you say if I told you how much rapture I feel at your disappointment? What would you say if I announced to you that your kind destiny has conducted an avenger into your apartment?—An avenger?—Yes, you now behold a young man at your feet—one who loves you passionately—who feels every sen-

timent of tenderness for you, and every degree of admiration for your charms!—You are really a young man, and you love me! but perhaps it is not love, exclaimed the Countess; you are here, Mademoiselle de Brumont, but are you really a young man?—My charming Countess, replied I, can have no doubt upon that head.—Well, then, said she, avenge my cause; be my avenger—marry me forthwith—I command you—I insist upon it.—My dear Eleanor, replied I, you need not command me—it is the most ardent wish of my soul. The good soul had every reason to be displeased with her husband, but the good man was unintentionally the author of my success. He had actually done so little that everything remained for me to do, but in enterprises of this description every obstacle only serves to add new fuel to the flame. My courage increased with the difficulties opposed to it, and acquired force from the recollection of past success. A few half-smothered sighs, the forerunners of bliss, announced my approaching triumph, and a mixture of pain and rapture completed the conquest over a young and innocent heart. This triumph was indeed of a most delicious nature,



in which the victor, highly pleased with the transports of his conquered antagonist, finds, in communicating pleasure, an additional relish for his own joys.

In justice to the quickness of apprehension possessed by this youthful Countess, I must state, that as soon as she recovered the use of her speech, she required to know who I was. I was prepared beforehand for this obvious question, which a female of less sensibility would have asked in the first instance, and hesitated not to declare to my charming Eleanor, that I was called the Chevalier de Flourvac; that the injustice of my parents, who were eager to secure a large fortune to my elder brother, had determined them to compel me to become a *Génôvefain*.—Ah! cried she, they wished to make you a monk; and then you would never have married anybody! what a frightful state! But, my dear Eleanor, cried I, something secretly whispered to me, that I had not the slightest inclination for that holy state. I did not, however, indulge the fond hope that my destiny had reserved for me the peculiar privilege of consummating a marriage not my own, while I feel a native instinct for the matri-

monial state. Under this influence, I fled from the convent in which I was confined: and my friend, the Vicomte de Valbrun, indignant at the selfishness of my brother, and the cruelty of my parents, has given me an asylum, has provided me with this disguise, and found me a more agreeable retreat than his own abode. I must therefore consider myself peculiarly fortunate, and return thanks to heaven, for conducting me to a young, beautiful, and delightful virgin, for the companion of my softer hours.—Heaven has been equally kind to me, my dear Flourvac, replied the Countess, embracing me tenderly, and you shall keep me company till your parents are dead.—My dear Eleanor, replied I, you have taken a heavy charge upon yourself, for my father is still a young man.—So much the better, replied she, we shall be longer together. Stay with me till the death of your parents, my dear Flourvac.—That is my determination and my wish.

While I was amusing the Countess with my invention of a family dispute, I helped her to put off the incumbrance of dress, which it had not occurred to me to do before, so eager was she to be revenged, and so prompt was I in executing her reasonable demands.

But now, kind reader, speaking without disguise, would you not wish to be in my place; in the arms of the charming Countess; and in the nuptial bed prepared for another man. I need not tell you that these were the happiest moments of my life, though I may communicate to you the pleasing reveries in which my sportive imagination revelled with uncontrolled delight. While engaged with my amiable pupil, I did not forget the more amiable preceptor who initiated me in the mysteries of love. In both instances, unexpected and extraordinary occurrences that prepared my happiness, had, almost under the eyes of an eccentric and ridiculous husband, thrown me into the arms of his charming better half! I found myself in the place intended for M. de Lignolle, instructing the Countess in the noble science which I had learned from the beautiful Marchioness de B—, under the auspices of her Marquis. But, alas! of these two rare and precious females, to whom my kind stars had rendered me so dear, one was already torn from me, and the other was doomed to see herself forsaken and undone.

But it would be disgraceful to me to quit

my interesting pupil, without completing her education; and what master has been more favoured by fortune than I have been, in such a pupil as Madame de Lignolle? The most charming creature, the dearest object of my heart, possessed of the most seductive graces, as well as the utmost docility, and the happiest disposition of mind! What sensibility, vivacity, and address, were combined in her formation! The same night began and finished her education, and rendered her experience complete: a night that must always be reckoned the happiest, as well as the shortest of my existence.

Not long before daylight, we became weary of our pleasing toils, and fell into a sound sleep. My surprise was great when I awoke, and looking at my watch, found that it had gone twelve. Heavens! cried I, M. de Valbrun has been waiting impatiently for me since eight o'clock! I then quitted my young Countess as quietly as I could, and left her in a deep slumber.

I ran to my chamber, half dressed, and opening the little door facing the stair-case, neither met nor saw anybody. Oh, my dear Sophia! a little scrap of paper in the key-hole, caught

my attention. The Vicomte had scrawled a few words on the slip of paper with a red pencil, and I found some difficulty in deciphering them:—

“ I knock—and you make no answer. Where are you Mademoiselle de Brumont? What are you doing? I cannot tell, though I can guess. What a pleasant piece of news for the Baroness! I return in less than two hours—but, will the Countess be up at two o’clock?”

I soon after awoke my young mistress, and took my place beside her. On opening her eyes, she cast a glance at me, full of more vivacity than tenderness, and I had reason to imagine that the caresses which followed it were not totally disinterested. A few incoherent expressions escaped her, mingled with half smothered sighs. These symptoms quickly intimated to me that my young pupil was prepared for another lesson, and was secretly wishing to complete her education.

Who, kind reader, could refuse her the favour, if he was still able to bestow it? I therefore recommenced my essays, when a loud knocking resounded at the chamber-door. I quitted my post on this alarm, and was prepar-

ing to get out of bed, but the Countess made me a signal to remain where I was, and then enquired with a firm voice, who was at the door?—It is I, replied M. de Lignolle, are you not getting up?—Not yet, sir.—Madam, it is very late.—Yes, but I am busy.—What are you doing?—I am composing with Mademoiselle de Brumont.—I wish I could take part in the lesson.—That cannot be, sir; you are not clever enough; you would hinder us from doing anything.—Pray, madam, what are you doing?—I am performing what you will have the credit of—that is, I am finishing a charade.—A charade, indeed; you are in search of the word.—Yes——wait a minute——I shall find it.

Now, said she, in a whisper to me, this is the moment of complete vengeance and satisfaction. I wish to play him a trick, the recollection of which will amuse me fifty years hence, if I live so long. My dear Flourvac, he has cruelly interrupted our pleasant pursuit.

She said no more, but a glance and a gesture, as well as a tender kiss, conveyed to me an order to resume the exercise so unfeelingly interrupted.

Pleasure rendered me docile and submissive,

and I obeyed without any murmur or remonstrance. Then, in order to prove to me, after Coralie,\*that more than one woman knows how, in a critical moment, to engage at once in many difficult occupations, and can at the same time act and speak most consistently and distinctly; Madame de Lignolle raised her voice, and said to the Comte: Sir, do you listen at the door?—Yes, madam, replied he, since you will not let me in.—Well,—here is my charade—Amo 'l primo mio, (Piano a Faublas abbracciandolo.) L'amo di molto. Amo 'l primo mio, ridisse il Lignollo. Signor sì, soggiunse ella. M'ama 'l secondo mio (Piano a Faublas.) M'ami. Ah! m'ami è vero? Non risponsi; ma l'abbracciai teneramente, mentre che 'l Lignollo con grandissima attenzione ridiceva: M'ama 'l secondo mio. Bravo, signor, disse la Contessina, e 'l mio integrale, benche composto da due, nondimeno fa più che uno (Piano a Faublas.) Deh! non è la—la verità? la verità—ben mio. Ma, disse Lignollo, dunque in prosa lo fate?—Signor—sì—in pro—sta volta sulle labra della svenuta la parola morì.

However she had full time to recover her

\* See the first year of his life.—TR.

senses, before her husband, who wished to guess the riddle, had ceased to repeat even one moment; my all, though made up of two persons, only makes one. Sir, replied the wild young Countess, more delighted than if she had composed an epic poem, as it is a virtuous action, I must in conscience, acquaint you with a very essential point: My charade is a species of enigma, consisting of two words. I must be frank with you, and declare that I will never tell it to you, and I am persuaded that you will never be able to guess it.—Not guess it, madam, replied he,—I will go and shut myself up in my study, I will return to you in half an hour. Well, sir, let it be so, I shall then be up.

Accordingly he returned as soon as the half-hour had elapsed. I was sitting by the side of the Countess in her boudoir and was taking a large cup of chocolate, which I had asked for without much ceremony. Ladies, said M. de Lignolle as he entered the apartment, you both know my new and elegant charade; it was criticised yesterday. Would you believe it, Mademoiselle de Brumont, it was criticised with great asperity, but envy lurks at the bottom of



these censures.—You are perfectly right, M. de Lignolle.—I was yesterday engaged, said he, in a circle of Amateurs of the *belles lettres*, (here I must relate this unpleasant anecdote) when a charade was proposed, which I immediately found out. Another person in the company hit upon the meaning exactly at the same moment as myself, yet the whole circle immediately congratulated him on his discovery, without taking the least notice of mine. This act of injustice has aroused my resentment, and has brought to my recollection a plan which I had meditated upon frequently before. It is the custom to notify every circumstance relating to charades in the ‘*Mercure de France*,’ as you know, mademoiselle, and at the end of every charade, it is the custom to insert the name, surname, title, residence, and even province and city of the author. This is all perfectly right, because encouragement should be given to talent; but is it not a frightful circumstance that a man who regularly devotes three or four days of the week to the investigation of the words that compose a conundrum, or rebus, in each number of the ‘*Mercure*,’ should not be repaid for his labours by a small portion

of glory, or literary adulation? This neglect is a proof of downright ingratitude, or I am much mistaken. But now for my plan: I am going to propose to the editor of the 'Mercure,' to open a public subscription, the produce of which shall be devoted to the publication of a large placard once a week, on which shall appear the names of the fortunate candidates who shall guess the conundrum, the riddle, and the charade of the foregoing week.—Your plan is excellent, Countess, but since you make mention of the charade, pray have you guessed mine?—Not as yet, madam, replied he, with an air of confusion.—Sir, said she, if you succeed in finding both the words, I make you promise, while your plan is in agitation, to move heaven and earth to have my charade inserted in the 'Mercure,' with its explanation, my name and yours, if you can solve it, and all the circumstances to which it gave rise. Madam, replied he, what you say has excited my attention to the subject.

The entrance of a chariot into the court-yard interrupted the Count in the middle of his speech, when a footman announced the Marchioness d'Armincour. She made her entry

rather precipitately, and going up directly to her niece, said; my dear niece, how fares it with you to-day?—Is there any change in your health?—Ah, you young rogue, I see you have every appearance of lassitude, and your eyes are dim; but it is all quite natural; I am no novice, I understand it all; I wish you joy on the occasion. Monsieur Le Comte, I equally congratulate you on your felicity; let us now be at peace; let us embrace, and be friends—perhaps we shall have a little nephew in nine months?—That's very possible, cried the Countess; my dear aunt, you are perfectly right, but why don't you compliment Mademoiselle de Brumont?

While the Marchioness turned round and engaged in conversation with me, I observed that M. de Lignolle approached the Countess, and whispered something into her ear. With every apparent attention to the aunt, my concern was to hear what the husband said to his wife:—Forgive me, my dear, said he, indulge the Marchioness in her mistake.—What, sir? replied she, are you not perfectly satisfied with me?—Oh! by all means, I commend you for your discretion.—Your compliment is quite un-

merited, replied she, my discretion is necessary and natural, and you owe me no thanks on that score. M. de Lignolle, seemed delighted with these expressions, and coming up to me said, Mademoiselle, I owe you eternal obligations for the pains you have taken with my dear Countess, in instructing her in a part so full of difficulties.—No difficulties, Monsieur le Comte replied I, quite the reverse. Oh, my dear mademoiselle, answered he, I am quite at home in the business, and fully sensible of your extraordinary complaisance. This frank and decisive compliment on the part of this paragon of husbands, quite disarmed me, I contented myself with repeating to him literally the equivocal compliment of his wife: my complaisance is necessary and natural, and you owe me no thanks on that score.

After this round of compliments, the conversation became general, and nothing on one side or the other appeared worthy of being recorded, and transmitted to posterity. However, about two o'clock, a gentleman was announced, who wanted to speak with me. The Countess was for having him come up, but I, knowing him to be M. de Valbrun, opposed that

step. Well, said she, let him speak to you here.—That cannot be, madam, replied I. She then gave me leave to retire, expressing a wish for my speedy return. I ran to the door, and seeing my friend, exclaimed: Good morning, my dear Vicomte!—Good morning, my dear Chevalier? Have you delivered the letter to my sister?—Yes, I have sent it to the convent. And the letter to my father? Yes, I put it into the general-post myself. And how is my Sophia? The Baroness has not seen her, said he; but an apartment is bespoke for you in the convent, as you desired. Then let us depart, my dear Vicomte——Let us set off instantaneously.—But, said he, have we not agreed to wait some time? No; replied I, I will not wait a moment.—But consider the danger.—I consider nothing; I will listen to nothing. O my dear Sophia, can I deliberate a moment, when I have a prospect of seeing you?—Yet hesitation and delay become necessary, observed he, and it would be right to pause.—My dear Vicomte, replied I, if you will not accompany me, I must go by myself. I would rather perish a hundred times than not see my Sophia to-day!—Chevalier de Faublas! and the Countess?

cried he.—What do you say, sir? replied I, the Countess is nothing when Sophia is in the case. As for my enemies, I defy them all.—But can no consideration determine you to defer your departure? said he.—No, my dear Vicomte; and I repeat my determination to you. If you do not attend me, I must set out alone, but still my gratitude to you is unalterable.—Well, then, said the Vicomte, since nothing can make you comply with my wishes, I must surrender to your resolution; but grant me one request. Speak, and rely on my indulgence.—Only wait till night, said he. In a quarter of an hour I must dine with the Baroness, and at five o'clock I will conduct her to you. When you see her enter the house of the Countess, be assured that my carriage shall be ready for you at the door. Do you then come down by the private staircase and join me, when I promise you most solemnly that I will attend you to the convent.—At six o'clock, precisely, my dear Vicomte.—At six o'clock precisely, I pledge my word of honour to you.

At the very moment M. de Valbrun bade me farewell, the Countess came down to invite me back. The dear creature, no doubt, thought

that she herself was the only object of my profound reverie during dinner, which, to my imagination, appeared tedious and uninteresting. But, oh, my dear Sophia, it was you, and you alone, that occupied the recesses of my heart.

When the dessert was over, and while we were drinking our coffee in the drawing-room, I several times looked at the Countess de Lignolle, and my eyes always met hers. I finally gazed voluntarily upon her sweet person. What a vivacity! how blooming! what a beautiful skin! that pretty mouth! ah, charming little woman, you deserve not to be forsaken on the second day of your marriage.

These reflections were the genuine effect of a compassionate feeling, too natural to be disapproved of by any one; but unfortunately I happened to be in a situation of mind when one reflection suggests an idea, speedily followed by another, which other ideas immediately displace, and thus it will occur that in consequence of this combination of ideas, that which was good in the origin turns out to be blameable in the end. Who, among yourselves, relying too much upon himself, would presume, in sim-

ilar cases, after having settled the exact point where he should stop, would presume, I say, to declare that he will never go beyond it? Show then your wonted indulgence to a youth, who, with his usual candour, makes at once a painful and delicate avowal.

I drew near the Countess, leaned towards her, and whispered in her ear: Could not I, my young friend, have a private conversation with you in the boudoir? Madame de Lignolle rose from her seat, and addressing her aunt, said: Will you, Madame la Marchioness, permit me to leave here for a moment?—Go, go, replied Madame d'Armincour; I well know that young women have always——indeed, interrupted the Count, with a kind of sneer; do you know what these ladies are going to be about? Composing a charade in prose.—Ah, sir, replied the Countess; what an ironical joy! how much bitterness! I don't wish to defend our production; it has cost us so little trouble. But it appears to me that whoever is incapable of guessing our charades, or of composing any, has no right to be in an ill-humour, or to make game of us.

This said, the cunning little Countess took



me into her boudoir, and, although we did not stop long, our charade was finished before we left the place.

I impatiently called tardy evening to my relief; it came at last, and I felt overjoyed. When the Baroness was announced I was near fainting; I could hardly stand on my legs; I was scarcely able to make a slight inclination to my protectress; but as soon as this extreme agitation had subsided, I made towards my room. I had hoped that the Countess, while welcoming the Baroness, would not have noticed my making my escape; but the watchful eye of a lover never loses sight of the least motion of the cherished object. Madame de Lignolle saw me go, and cried out to me: Are you going, Mademoiselle de Brumont?—Yes, madam.—But you will soon come again, I hope?—Oh, yes!—Madame—I—shall—re—return—yes—I will try—yes, madam, as soon as possible.

I will confess that I could only speak in broken accents, and that I trembled as I bade her that fatal adieu. Poor little dear!

I crossed her apartment and my room, ran down the private staircase, leaped through the

street door, and jumped into the Vicomte's carriage.

In the course of five minutes I reached the convent, the wished-for asylum. A nun let me in, and enquired who I was.—The widow Grandval.—I am going to conduct you into your apartment, sister.—No, sister, pray tell me where all your boarders are collected now? —They are at prayers, sister.—Where do they read those prayers!—In the chapel.—And where is the chapel?—Facing you.

I ran to the chapel, the whole extent of which my inquisitive eye surveyed at once. A number of females were saying their prayers. One among them seemed particularly attentive to her devotions. My heart was moved, and beat violently. Methought I saw her long dark hair, her slender waist, her enchanting graces. I advanced a few paces—I beheld her! Gracious heavens! Faublas! happy husband! check the violence of this first transport; go quietly to kneel close to her.

Madame de Faublas was so preoccupied that she did not perceive a stranger had just placed herself by the side of her. I listened to the fervent prayer she was addressing to heaven.—

Great God! said she, it is true that I had been his guilty lover, but thou hast allowed me to become his legitimate wife! I thought that a long absence had sufficiently punished a moment's weakness. If thy justice, nevertheless, has not relented; if, according to the august severity of thy verdicts thou hast decided that my offence could be obliterated only by an everlasting separation, almighty God! God of kindness! who art pleased to display thy infinite mercy, even when thou punishest, remember that I am a mortal; hasten to strike the blow; take my life! A speedy death will prove a signal favour granted to thy victim; and, if thou shouldst deign to gratify her last wish, thou wilt allow, at her last hour, that she may see her husband once more!—once only!—thou wilt permit Faublas to close her eyelids, and to receive her last breath.

I overheard her prayer. My first motion was to run before her, and to show her that husband she had called for. I nevertheless retained sufficient presence of mind to be made sensible we should be ruined if we were noticed, and had fortitude enough to moderate my impatience and check my excessive joy until such

time as the church service was over, and that I might make myself known to Sophia when she was by herself, I relished only the happiness of admiring her.

The divine service had just finished. Sophia rose without even seeing me, because, absorbed in grief, she could see none of the surrounding objects. I regulated my steps after hers, and followed her gently, close behind. She had just left the chapel, and was going to cross the yard. Just as I was stepping into it, several men,\* rushing on a sudden from the recess in which they were concealed, surrounded and seized me. Surprise and fright made me send forth a loud scream, a terrible cry, that reached the ears of Sophia.

My beloved, knowing my voice, turned round, too soon undoubtedly, since she could still see me. I myself heard her address to me a useless complaint. I saw her holding out her arms to me, and I saw her fall in the midst of the terrified women who surrounded her! Alas! where are my arms? Where are my friends?

\* Sensible readers, remember the letter to my father, sent to the post-office on the preceding day—and conjecture.

The barbarous satellites overpower me, they being so numerous; they drag me away at a great distance from my wife! from my wife, who had fainted away!—Cruel God! Unmerciful God! Hadst thou heard the last prayer she addressed thee!

Useless are the ravings of impotent fury, nothing can save me. The gates of that convent, which I had entered so rashly, opened a second time! I was put into a coach, which started immediately. It did not roll long. I hear immense gates to creak over enormous hinges; I see a strong castle, the drawbridge is let down before me. I enter a vast tower; decorated officers receive me—Alas! I am in the Bastille.



## TO THE PUBLIC.

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You have it in your power to set me at liberty; but, to induce you to be so kind, it is proper you should be desirous of perusing a new sequel to my adventures. If you should not continue to this essay the indulgence with which you have honoured the first, I shall find myself condemned to end my days in prison; and, unlike a great number of my fellow-sufferers, shall enjoy the sad advantage only, of knowing wherefore I have been sent and continue there.

END OF THE SIX WEEKS.





CONCLUSION OF THE AMOURS  
OF THE  
CHEVALIER DE FAUBLAS.

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ALAS! I am in the Bastille! I stayed there during the whole of the winter season, four months, four entire months. It has often been published, yet I am compelled to write it over again:\* sorrows of every description are collected together in that dreary habitation, and the most inconsolable of all those grievances,

\* It was in the month of July, 1788, that I was then urging my claims, in conjunction with all my fellow-citizens. Who could have guessed at the time, that in July, 1789, the Bastille would be carried by storm in less than three hours, by my valiant countrymen. Who could have anticipated the rapid progress of the revolution, which was to secure to us both personal and public liberty? Thanks be returned to thee, God of my country! thou hast cast upon it an enlivening glance; thou hast supplied it exactly at the same period, all such men, and every necessary event that might accomplish its so desirable and so difficult regeneration.

Ennui, dreadful Ennui, watches day and night by the side of Inquietude and Sadness.

I firmly believe that Death would soon be the only inhabitant of the place, if it were possible to prevent Hope penetrating within its walls. O, my king! the day on which your equity will suggest your destroying these scandalous prisons, will be a day of rejoicing for your subjects.

The sun, which for about two hours perhaps illumined the remainder of the world, scarcely began to enlighten us unhappy prisoners. Scarcely did one of its feeble rays, obliquely directed, illumine half of the narrow and long window that had been sparingly formed in an enormous thick wall; my eyes, which for a long time since had no more tears to shed; my eyes, worn down, were going to be closed for a few moments; for a short time I had ceased calling, Sophia, or death! on a sudden, I hear my treble door open, the governor came in, shouting out to me: liberty! liberty!

How can an unfortunate mortal, after having been detained only a few days in one of the less dreary dungeons of the Bastille, hear that word without his joy killing him? How

have I been able to survive the excess of mine? I cannot tell; but what I well know, is, that I was going to run half-naked out of my tomb, when it was represented to me that I must at least take time to dress myself. Never did my toilet appear to me so long, never was it completed so expeditiously.

It was but a short time before I reached the first gate. As soon as it was opened M. de Belcour\* ran to meet me; with what transport I embraced my father! with what pleasure did he receive me within his arms!

Subsequent to addressing to me the mildest reproaches, after having returned me the other tender caresses, the Baron heard the delicate question which a husband, tormented with impatience and inquietude, was already repeating. I could wish, said he, to restore you to your Sophia; but for a charming woman, who feels the most lively interest for whatever concerns you——

I thought the Baron meant the Marchioness de B—; a sigh escaped me. Whoever will re-

\* It will be recollected, perhaps, that Baron de Faublas had assumed the name of Belcour, in the retreat where we lived concealed in the vicinity of Luxembourg.

member what the Marchioness had done and suffered for me, will excuse that sigh, I am not aware whether my father had been surprised at my heaving it, but he kept silent for some minutes, looked at me most steadfastly, and then resumed:

That lady who feels so lively an interest to whatever concerns you, has told me,—Has told you! have you then seen her, father?—Did you speak to her?—I have.—Well! is not she indeed—But you were just now making the observation: she is truly charming—I own it.—And you believe, father, that she continues highly concerned?—In your case? I do so.—She has been saying to you?—That Madame de Faublas has been obliged to leave her convent the day after that on which you had been arrested there; no one has been able to discover where Lovinski has concealed her.—Oh, my dear wife! Oh! what a situation she was in, when the military, having surrounded me, overpowered me by their numbers; I saw her fall,—faint away—ready to breathe her last. Ah! if my Sophia is no more, it is all over with me.—Reject those fatal ideas!—your wife probably is not dead, she lives to love you: the

day on which she left her convent, she looked very sad, very uneasy, but nothing was apprehended respecting her life.—I feel comforted at this assurance, we shall find her out again! —I ardently wish it may be so; but I could not dare to vouch for it. I have made great enquiries, we shall make more; but I confess that I begin to doubt of our being successful.—What! father, she lives, I am at liberty, and should I not find her out! Ah! I will find her out, you may rest assured of that.

Meanwhile, our carriage was ready. We were out of the Bastille, and near La Porte Saint Antoine, where a man, on horseback, having beckoned our coachman to stop, delivered a letter to me, saying: From my master, here present;—at the same time he pointed to a young cavalier, who was capering facing us, at the entrance of the boulevard. Notwithstanding the round hat which almost covered the eyes of the handsome youth, I recognised the Vicomte de Florville; I knew again the elegant *frac Anglais* which he sported in happier times, to come into the room of the Chevalier Faublas, to disabuse a too unjust lover; and, at other times, to conduct Mademoiselle du Portail to

the petite maison of Saint Cloud. I hastened to look out, crying aloud: It is her! The Vicomte immediately honoured me with the most caressing smiles, kissed his hand to me, and galloped away.

Delighted at seeing her again, and unable to check my joy, I continued crying out: It is her! The Baron kept crying out:—You will fall out—take care—you will fall out, sir.—Father, it is her!—What her?—Her, father—that charming woman we were speaking of just now—only look!

I thought that I had now taken hold of M. de Belcour's hand, whereas, I was pulling and tearing his ruffle.—If you wish me to look, make a little room, said he to me, where is she to be seen?—Yonder, yonder! she is already at some distance, but you can still distinguish her pretty horse, and charming dress.—What! does she dress in men's clothes sometimes?—Often.—And she rides on horseback!—Well; very well! with infinite grace! and in a masterly style!—You seem to know more about her than I do, said the Baron, who seemed to be a little out of humour, I did not know all that.—Father, will you permit me to read what she has written to me?—To be sure, and even aloud,

if it is to be done; you will oblige me.—I read aloud:

“Until such time as your unfortunate duel is entirely forgotten, sir, no more than your father, (who is very right to keep the name which he had assumed at Luxembourg), can you re-appear in the metropolis under that of Faublas; let you be called Chevalier de Florville, if you should not dislike it, and if you do not find it too painful sometimes to call to mind the recollection of a friend, to the solicitations of whom you are obliged for your liberation.”

I was well aware of her soliciting, interrupted the Baron, but she did not expect to succeed so soon. I only received this morning the happy tidings of your approaching liberation, and the letter was written by an unknown hand.—Proceed, read on:

“We may have a moment’s conversation together this evening: you will receive this evening a visit from Madame de Montdesir, and will act as she directs. Burn this note.”

The Baron asked me instantly who that Madame de Montdesir was? I answered him that

I did not know. There is always, replied he with impatience, something mysterious and extraordinary in whatever happens to you. However, I shall have the whole business explained to me this evening.—This evening, father?—Yes, this very evening: we shall go to her house, to return our thanks to that lady.

Shall we go to her house?—but I cannot make my appearance there.—Why not?—Because her husband——Could her husband find fault?—But her husband is dead.—Dead?—To be sure he is—you, who seems so well acquainted with whatever concerns her, cannot be ignorant of that.—How could I know of it, father—if he is dead, I am very sorry for it.—Poor Marquis de B—, most likely it is in consequence of his wounds; I shall have to reproach myself with that as long as I live.

M. de Belcour no longer heard what I was saying, because his carriage had just stopped at a convent in the rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, near the place Vendôme. You are going to see your sister, said the Baron.—Ah! my dear Adelaide—I have placed her there, continued my father, that we might have her nearer to us: you may notice, presently, and with pleas-



ure no doubt, that from the window of the hotel where I now lodge, you may see your sister when she will be walking in the garden, during the hours of recreation. You conceive it was impossible for me to continue in the rue de l'Université, but on the contrary, that I was right to choose another part of the town than the Fauxbourg Saint Germain. Follow me, we shall take home Adelaide, who will not be sorry to dine with us.

She at first came down into the parlour. I found her very much embellished during the five months of my absence. She looked better-made, more womanlike, taller, and handsomer. Oh! sweet, lovely girl! if I had not been your brother, what would not I have given to be your lover?

I held her hand, which I bathed with my tears, hers dropped on my hand, and my father lavished upon us both a thousand sweet caresses. It was me, however, whom he kissed most frequently. Be not jealous, said he to my sister, who had made the observation with her wonted candour: Allow me on this day to love him a little more than I cherish you, for upwards of six months, perhaps, I have suffered and been

uneasy, but not on your account, my dear girl, it is not you who occasioned my sorrow. The Baron, in order to soften this kind of reproach, pressed me twenty times to his bosom.

From the convent we reached our hotel in less than a minute. My father then put me in possession of the apartment he had intended for me. I was glad to find my faithful Jasmin in my anti-chamber; but I could not, without much grief, behold in my bed-room, which was very small, one single narrow bed. Oh, father! you have lodged the Chevalier de Faublas as if he were destined to continue long a widower. This is the apartment of celibacy!

The Baron, instead of answering me, opened an adjacent door.

After crossing several extensive rooms, I entered a very rich one, in which I discovered two alcoves, and a couple of beds. I jumped through joy. This, thought I, is the temple of Hymen! Love will bring me back my wife here! Father, I shall occupy this room only in the company of Love—of my Sophia! Until such times as my wife is restored to me, I shall inhabit the dismal apartment. Nobody shall enter this; none—no beauty, unworthy of this

place, shall profane it by her presence. And this boudoir, how pretty it is! how nicely furnished! pretty, and nice, no doubt! but when my beloved will have entered it, only once, to receive my adoration, the boudoir will no longer exist; it will not only be a temple, but a sanctuary. I shall never approach the altar, but with holy respect.

The altar—it was an *ottomane*—I addressed, and kissed it.

No one, except myself, is to approach it. Ah, my dear sister, don't you go into it! never enter it, my dear Adelaide, I beseech you! The entrance of this abode is closed to every one except my wife! Yes, my Sophia, I take my solemn oath, never shall a mortal female penetrate into that sanctuary where my homage awaits thee. I swear it over again, she alone shall be worshipped there. She, the deity whom my most ardent wishes will seek after daily.

Whilst taking that double oath, useless at best, the Chevalier de Florville was far from suspecting, that before the day was at an end, a mighty scandalous scene was to occur in that place, so rashly consecrated.

My father made me observe, that the boudoir

opened into a dressing closet, which led to a passage, at the further extremity of which there was a private staircase. I was not easily prevailed upon to leave my wife's apartment; before Monsieur de Belcour could persuade me to enter his, he was obliged to listen to the tender exclamations, and to admire the caresses which I bestowed upon every piece of furniture in the delightful boudoir.

Do not ask me how it so happened that several hours glided away, without my being able to think once of Madame de B—, without having found time to ask my father about the situation of that widow who must have been so dear to me. Think that Adelaide was speaking to me of her friends; think, that my sister was lamenting, in company with me, the absence of my beloved.

We were still weeping, when the gate of the hotel was opened with a great bustle. My father hearing the rattling of a carriage, ran to the window; and then returned to me. My friend, it is her, although she knew very well that you were here, for I had sent her word, she is come most likely to dine with me. I was preparing to go down stairs, M. de Belcour prevented me;

you shall not go to meet her in the hall, that is my office.—Father!—Stop here, my friend; stop with Adelaide, I insist upon it.

He went down, and returned a moment after. In real truth I expected to see the Marchioness de B—; but it was the Baroness de Fonrose who made her appearance. My surprise, already great, became extreme when I saw her accompanied by a handsome little brunette, who, as quick as lightning, flew into my arms. When she had pressed me twenty times between hers, embraced me twenty times, and called me as repeatedly her beloved, she perceived there were two persons in the room whom she did not know, and who, very much surprised at her excessive joy, and at her vivacity more excessive still, silently looked at her, and seemed to wait impatiently till she had done. I beg your pardon, said she, to my father, making a curtsy; I had not noticed you—but it is no fault of mine—it is because——It is proper I should tell you, I am naturally rather quick; and without waiting for M. de Belcour's answer: Who is this young person? said she to me, showing Adelaide. As soon as I had answered she was my sister, she ran to embrace her, saying: I am

glad, mademoiselle, you are so nearly related, for I think you are very pretty.

My dear Adelaide, much confused and agitated, could not reply a single word, but I heard my father, scarcely recovered from his surprise, begging Madame de Fonrose to tell him the name of that lady whom, in fact, he found rather lively. The Baroness replied, aloud: She is one of my most intimate friends; I believe I have occasionally mentioned to you the Countess de Lignolle. My father next addressed the Countess: It appears to me that my son has the honour of being known to you, madam?—Very much so, sir, returned she.—Yes, very much so, repeated the Baroness, who laughed at the same time; they have composed charades together.

The company were all seated, the Countess beckoned to me to come and sit close to her; as I was going, the Baron stopped me: What a light-headed boy you are! said he, and then presenting me to the Baroness: Madam, said he, receive my son's best thanks.—It is to be confessed that he owes me some; I have been expeditious in bringing back to him a pretty lady to whom no doubt he bears some friend-

ship.—But, resumed he, that is not the only reason.—You are right, he is moreover obliged to me for having introduced him to her. I accordingly was eager to go and fetch the Countess this morning, as soon as I was apprised of the Chevalier having been liberated.—As soon as I apprised you of it (but I hope you knew of it before I sent you word)?—Not I.—How so! did not you intercede for his release?—It is true that I have solicited, but—Is it not to you that he is indebted for his liberation?—Upon my honour, I don't believe he is.—I wonder, madam, exclaimed he, rather in an ill humour, why you should reject the manifestation of the father's gratitude, and solicit at the same time the son to express the whole of his—I, solicit the son! what do you mean, sir?—To be sure, madam; you conceal from me the success you have met with, and hurry away to impart it to the Chevalier.—Pray tell me, sir, retorted she, in a tone of impatience, how can I have informed the Chevalier, since I have not—How? By means of the letter which you wrote to him this morning.—The letter!

Now I could see plainly that during the

whole morning the Chevalier de Faublas and his father had been playing at cross purposes; it was evident that the latter had always meant Madame de Fonrose, whereas the former thought only of Madame de B—. Struck at the warmth of M. de Belcour's explanation with Madame de Fonrose, I could no longer doubt his being very much in love with her, and rather jealous of me. Had I spoken a single word, I might have vindicated the Baroness; but I wished to avoid exposing the Marchioness and picking up a quarrel with the Countess. What was I to determine? Whilst I was contriving to find out the means of conciliating such jarring interests, Adelaide appeared absorbed in deep meditation, Madame de Lignolle to be uneasy in her mind, Madame de Fonrose out of patience; and the Baron went on, saying:

Yes, madam, a letter from you, which was delivered to him as we were going by la Porte Saint-Antoine, a letter in which you were pleased to call him de Florville.—De Florville!—And in which you inform him that he may expect to receive, in the evening, a visit from a certain Madame de Montdesir.—I rejoice at your having made me acquainted with



that name. I must confess, however, sir, that I long for your putting an end to this untimely, procrastinated joke.—It depends entirely upon yourself, madam; you need but make a plain confession——Of what, sir? Am I accountable for all the whimsical reveries that torture your brains?—Merely confess, continued he, in an angry tone, confess that, stationed at the extremity of the boulevard, you were waiting patiently till the Chevalier should cast a look at you.—Are you cracking your jokes, sir; or have you lost the use of your senses?—Confess, madam; I shall not be angry, though I should think it rather surprising that you should have deemed it advisable to ride off at full speed, when I offered to look out at the window.—Ride off! a very proper expression!—Gallop away, if you like it better.—This is no less correct!—Why not? vociferated he, quite in a passion; why not full gallop, since you were on horseback, and in man's clothes?—Will you tell me that I was on the boulevard this morning on horseback, and in man's clothes? Are you in good earnest?—Can you deny it? That is going too far!—you have been seen, madam, as I now see you.—Who saw me, sir?—My

son.—He?—He did; he, in person, did see you.—If it is so, I shall abide by what he is going to say. Speak, Chevalier, is it me whom you have seen?—No, madam, answered I.—How, sir, exclaimed M. de Belcour. Did you not tell me——We did not understand one another, sir; you imagined I meant one lady, and I was speaking of another.—Of whom, then?—I beg to be excused.

The Countess, rising with great vivacity, said to me: I insist upon knowing!—I pretended to laugh, whilst saying: You wish to know?—Yes, returned she, I wish to know who that female was, who, so anxious to see you, was watching your going by this morning, and has written to you.—You wish to know?—I do, sir.—What! in good earnest? continued I, affecting a great surprise; you wish me to tell?—How provoking! I insist.—Do you, positively, madam?—To be sure.—You exact of me?—Out with it, I say.—But, if I obey you, won't you be angry with me?—No.—Weigh it in your mind.—I have no patience with you.—Well, then, suppose I only tell you, and in a whisper?—You keep me on the rack! No, sir, speak aloud, that every one may

hear you.—I have your leave?—Certainly, since I order you so to do.—You command me? —I do; yes, a hundred times over I do.—Most likely you have your particular reasons?—To be sure I have.—That alters the case—I therefore shall speak it out. (Addressing the Baron and Baroness, and pointing out the Countess) It was this lady.—That is not true, cried she.—So, then, you won't believe that I knew you again?—I swear it was not me!

I maintained it was her, and put on such an air of assurance and of truth that my father believed me. The Baroness herself entertained no further doubts. It is true, said she to the Countess, that you sometimes wear men's clothes, and that you were not at home this morning when I called. I waited for you nearly an hour.

In vain did Madame de Lignolle, more chagrined than I can express, cry out: I was gone to my aunt's Madame d'Armincour's. Never in my life-time have I crossed a horse; neither did I know that the Chevalier was to be set at liberty so soon.

Her vociferation was of no avail; no one appeared to believe her. As for me, persever-

ing in an impenetrable *sang froid*, truly proper to redouble her impatience, I ceased not repeating coolly: Ah! I knew you again! I verily believe that the Countess would have jumped out of window, if I had been cruel enough to deprive her of the only amusement which afforded her some consolation—namely, that of pinching my arm; and of breaking her fan by knocking it upon my fingers!

You are angry with me, madam. I told you that would be the case! I had foreseen as much when I resisted! Wherefore would you compel me to speak out?—Why, sir, could I guess—— That I would name you?—Ah! that is it! you urged me so pressingly, merely that I should name another person? I wonder I was not sensible of that. I have been very wrong, very wrong indeed! What a dunce I was!

As I spoke at this rate, I pretended to lower my voice; but, at the same time, I took particular care to pronounce distinctly, so that all present might hear me. She noticed it, and was so vexed in consequence, that she would have beaten me in good earnest, if I had not run away.

Oh, my Sophia! I flew to your apartment, and

went to your very boudoir—there to find a safe asylum.

I was mistaken, however. Madame de Lignolle entered it almost as soon as myself. Either too reprehensible, or too thoughtless, I only viewed the pleasure of meeting with her in so delicious a place, where I had it in my power to have the cruel frenzy replaced by the soft effervescence of love. I clasped her within my arms! and, in the most affectionate tone, addressed her in these words: Since you assure me it was not you, I must believe you; yet I would have bet every louis-d'or I am worth, that Madame de Lignolle had met me this morning near the boulevard. Lovely Countess! what does this mistake which grieves you evince? Nothing more, assuredly, except that at all times the recollection of you being so predominant, your adorer sees you everywhere.—Well, now, answered the Countess, this is sound reasoning. Why did you not urge it sooner? I would not have been so angry.

She gave me a kiss. I had taken a twofold oath: the one was already entirely forgotten, since Madame de Lignolle continued in the boudoir, which I had not opposed her entering: the

other—with due humility I confess, though my feelings may be hurt—the other, which may not be deemed less essential, I was on the point, as irreligiously, and perhaps as promptly, to violate, if Madame de Fonrose had not come on a sudden to prevent my perjuring myself twice basely at the same moment——alas!

Come along, my dears, said she, as she opened the door, what are you doing there? You act too inconsiderately; you do indeed. The Baron is angry; he will not allow his daughter to dine with us. In true conscience, is he wrong? Come along with me: let us go in again.—This is a handsome boudoir, said the Countess. Thither we shall return, Monsieur de Faublas, du Portail, de Flourvac, de Florville—for you sport half a hundred different names.—What! are you apprised of all that, Countess?—And of many other things besides. I must tell you before-hand, you and I shall quarrel together ere long.

I locked the door of my wife's apartment. The Countess watched an opportunity of seizing the key, which she put in her pocket. You probably have another, said she, and I want this.

When these two ladies re-entered the saloon, my father was gone. I ran out to meet him as he was going out with Adelaide. My dear sister's eyes were bathed in tears: That lady, dear brother, occasions us a deal of trouble. Most likely it is on her account that we are not to dine together; she makes too free, and is too petulant; believe me, do not trust to her. Let me tell you, brother, I dislike those ladies that ride on horseback. Don't you, once more, on account of that one, assume an Amazon's garb to go and fight her husband. Could you derive any pleasure from injuring a man of honour, and like to return to the Bastille? Do not fall in love with that lady, I beg of you. Think of my *bonne amie*, she will soon come back; she loves you dearly, and I tell you, that Countess would occasion her as much sorrow as the Marchioness, who caused her to shed so many tears.

Thus would my dear Adelaide, unknowingly, administer good advice. But how was I to relish her morality, at a time when the Countess was up stairs waiting for me? Could I listen to reason, when pleasure was so near at hand? A day will come, my lovely sister, yes, a day will come, when you, influenced by your pas-

sions, will find it difficult, without hard struggling to join example to precept. Till such time, innocent preacher, your salutary speech is of no avail, your grief alone perplexes me, and whilst your father is taking you back, I shall go to see the beloved of my heart.

M'ama 'l secondo mio, said Madame de Fonrose, who saw me embrace the dear creature. Amo 'l primo mio, repeated she as Madame de Lignolle returned the compliment. But after running between us, she added: gently, my dears, it grieves me thus to part two such pretty creatures, you must, however, postpone concluding the charade.

The Baroness happening to mention the charade so *apropos*, I became sensible that the Countess kept no secrets from her friend.

Placed between two handsome females, one of whom applauded the tender language which the other was lavishing upon me, I could not but find that, "the moments did slide on promptly," and to speak the truth, I thought my father was scarcely gone, when I saw him return. The Baron addressed the Countess with cold civility, thanks, however, to Madame de Fonrose, cheerfulness prevailed during dinner.



The Baroness would smile at Monsieur de Belcour at every sprightly sentence he uttered, and the gentleman seemed to be highly pleased at those smiles. Nevertheless, the Baron, more delighted still, at seeing me returned to his table, would frequently and for a long time keep his eyes fixed upon me; he would often speak of Adelaide, and each time that he mentioned her name, the recollection of her being absent caused him to heave a deep sigh. During that too short dinner, believe me father, and I shall remember it all the days of my life, I needed only pay a slight attention to perceive that your mistress might occupy your attention momentarily, but that you unceasingly felt for your daughter, and that it was on account of your son only, that you were made happy. Yes, father, I observed you for a single moment only, and I was quite sensible that notwithstanding the allurements of that love, so powerful and so tyrannical, parental affection alone procured you that satisfaction you wished to conceal, and the joy you felt so delighted in exhibiting.

A friend to us both came to share in it; the Vicomte de Valbrun, who had just been ap-

prised of my release, was come to congratulate me upon the occasion. It appeared to me as if Madame de Fonrose had wished he had not been in such a hurry. The gentleman assumed, when addressing her, the proudly modest tone which seems to be the privilege of a former lover, and I could see Monsieur de Belcour, on the reverse, affect to display the proud airs of a preferred rival. The business is settled, whispered the Vicomte, who perceived that I observed every performer in this scene, quite new to me, it is a settled affair, the Baroness has entirely done with me. Alas! continued he laughing, I am the author of mine own miseries. The Baron having heard from me that you were confined, returned to Paris, I introduced him to the Baroness, and on a sudden the ingrate seduced her from me. I shall feel quite happy, however, if his son condescends to suffer me to continue the tranquil possessor of that little Justine, to whom in the present circumstances I devote my leisure hours.—His son, you may rest assured, Vicomte, will not interfere with your amours!—I dare not trust you; swear by Sophia.—With all my heart! I swear.

That was a luckless day for me taking my oath: it will soon be found that I perjured myself once more.

When will you have done, gentlemen, said Madame de Lignolle, tired of our whispering. Whom are you speaking of in that mysterious converse—is it of Madame de Montdesir.—Madame de Montdesir! repeated the Vicomte.—The Countess in a spiteful and ironical tone, replied: she is an unknown fair lady, who intends paying a visit to the Chevalier this evening; her intention she has imparted this morning in a billet-doux. Monsieur de Valbrun, with an air of astonishment, again re-echoed the Countess's last words: a billet-doux.—Yes, desire the Chevalier to show it to you, you will find it a very interesting epistle.

Ah! chevalier, do me that pleasure.

I readily granted the request, and presented the Marchioness's letter to Monsieur de Valbrun. He read it over several times, seemingly with no less inquietude than attention, and returned it to me, without offering the least observation.—But a moment after we had done dinner, he drew me towards one of the balconies, and said: I can guess who wrote that letter.—

I am very glad you did not mention it.—Oh! make yourself easy. With regard to Madame de Montdesir, it is Madame de B—who—I interrupted Monsieur de Valbrun, I am of your opinion; it most assuredly must be the Marchioness.—The Vicomte then added: during the time of your incarceration, which might have lasted very long, Justine has told me a hundred times that Madame de B— was continually labouring to procure your liberation. She, perhaps, has something very interesting to impart.—May be so, and undoubtedly that is the object of her visit this evening.—I am not sorry in the least at her coming to you, since such a step may prove serviceable; but be cautious, think of Madame de Lignolle, think of Sophia, do not—

The Countess, who did not lose sight of me for one single moment, now came to join us, and put an end to a conversation, during which the Vicomte and myself had given a different meaning to several words susceptible of being interpreted in various ways; once more I must beg my reader's pardon, but we too had been playing at cross purposes.

Meanwhile, the Baroness was speaking of go-

ing to the opera. As soon as Monsieur de Belcour understood that the Countess would not accompany Madame de Fonrose, he declared that he would not leave his home. The latter lady tried by her complaisant insinuations to induce him to go out, and vexed at finding he would not be persuaded, finally vowed that she would stay likewise; the Countess, on the other hand, who was uneasy in her mind, was protesting that she would keep me company the whole evening; and would say in a faltering tone of voice: I shall be glad to know this Madame de Montdesir, so anxious to appoint a meeting. She next added, in a mild tone: Have you not besides something particular to say to me? I confess that Madame de Lignolle's jealousy and her tender vivacity perplexed me strangely. To speak the truth I rapturously indulged the sweet hope which her polite question had given rise to! "Have you not something particular to say to me?" But flattering myself with a sweeter hope still, persuaded that, under a fictitious name, Madame de B—, perhaps within quarter of an hour, would be in the Chevalier de Florville's apartment, I enquired of myself what pressing concern could

bring her back to me in such a hurry; nay, sometimes I presumed to think that love, justly offended at the violent resolutions she had formed at the fatal village of Hollrisse, would glory in restoring her to me here, more weak than ever. Every one, in course, may judge of the embarrassment of the Chevalier de Faublas, anxious to return his best thanks with the utmost expedition to his dear benefactress, towards whom he was bound to be grateful in more than one way; but followed at every step by an eager pupil, who seemed to wait impatiently for the lesson which her tutor would have been sorry to refuse her. Let every one, therefore, pity a young man, compelled in the first instance to dismiss the handsome Countess to make room for the beautiful Marchioness, and subsequently reduced to the hard necessity of sending away his primary teacher to receive his first pupil; let this be apprehended, lest in such a predicament he may commit some blunder—Alas! in so perplexing a situation who could, better than myself, have continued in his proper senses?

I determined upon what I imagined to be the best plan: I seized the opportunity of the

Countess and Baroness being in close conversation to make my escape; I ran to my apartment called my servant, and said to him: Go, Jasmin, and stand watching at the street door; a lady will soon come, who will enquire for the Chevalier de Florville; you will desire her to follow you,—you will even beg of her, very politely, so to do, for she is a lady of high rank; on account of its being dark, the porter will not see you go by; cross the yard, and go up the private staircase; the lady will be kind enough to wait in my apartment; you will leave her then without a light, because it must not be seen from the Baron's windows that there is any one in my room; do you understand me? —I do, sir.—Wait a little, that is not all; instead of calling for me at the Baron's, you will go down into the yard, and thrum on your violin that tune which you scrape so nicely: “*Tandis que tout sommeille.*” When you think that I have heard you, come up here again and wait for my further commands.—Have you well comprehended all that I have been saying?—I have, sir.—I need not repeat it, then?—No, sir, and you are going to be obeyed. Oh! how glad I am to see you again. I was

right to say that when my young master should return, love and pleasures would revisit my anti-chamber.—You were forgetful of your perquisites, Jasmin—take this, for I like men of bright intellects.

I had scarcely left the Countess for a minute and she already wanted to send a servant after me. For upwards of an hour I had been waiting in her company for the appointed signal. Jasmin began—the good fellow scraped like a street fiddler; nevertheless, admire the power of my imagination over my senses; at the first thrums of the squeaking instrument, methought I heard king David playing on his harp, or, if you like it better, Amphion fingering his lyre. Never did Violli, our modern Amphion, in his best days, draw from his instrument more delightful sounds.

Most fortunately my enthusiasm did not enrapture me to such a degree as to render me forgetful of the happy moments that awaited me. I approached the Countess, and whispered to her, with apparent eagerness: When will you allow me a private interview?—As soon as possible, she candidly replied: We only need to contrive the means of making our escape.—



I shall weigh it in my mind; try yourself to find out some expedient—but hear me—I know how to manage it. Sir, said she to my father, I have been told by the Baroness that you liked backgammon.—So I do.—I am a tolerable good hand at it.—Would you wish to try a game, madam?—With all my heart.

I was highly surprised at her proposing to play a game with my father, in order to procure me a private interview as had been proposed! that appeared to me arranging matters very awkwardly; I however, felt some consolation from the reflection, that if the Countess's paramour was to be a loser, in consequence, the Marchioness's lover must be made a gainer. I imagined that I should be able to effect my escape without Madame de Lignolle noticing it. But I was mistaken. The sweet little creature kept watching me, she called me to come near her, insisted upon my sitting down, and would not allow me under any pretence whatever, to leave my seat.

This had already lasted half an hour, I began to grow tired, and the Marchioness likewise, when Jasmin began his solo over again. My worthy confidant feared, perhaps, my not

having heard him at first, for he now made a devilish noise. One may easily conceive to what a degree my impatience was heightened by this loud scraping; I could feel as if a hundred thousand pins were stuck into me, and (mind what ingratitude) Amphion's lyre now appeared to me but a sorry bagpipe. The Baron, who happened to make a bad move at the time, did not find the music very melodious; he ran to the window, opened it, and asked who was the cursed scraper who made his head ache. 'Tis me, sir, returned Jasmin, thankful for the compliment that had just been paid him; it is me.—Be so kind as not to interrupt me at this rate.—I, dutiful son like, through regard for my father, who was catching cold at the window, lustily cried out: have done, Jasmin, you make such a noise; one can hear you in the drawing-room as well as if you were in it; be quiet.—Presently—presently, you know what I mean? I do, sir, you have said enough, I perfectly comprehend your meaning.

Pleased with my zealous interference, the Baron resumed his seat with an air of satisfaction: the giddy Countess soon lost the game. Under a pretence of having been seized on a

sudden with a violent headache, she refused taking her revenge, and begged of the Baroness to play for her. As soon as Madame de Fours rose had taken her place, she joined me in a distant corner; and asked me in a low voice whether there was a light on the staircase? There is, my little pupil.—Go away then, I shall follow you.—Immediately?—Yes, my dearest.—How imprudent that would be! beware of attempting it.—Why not?—Because there is no possibility of our leaving the company at the same time.—Don't you say so!—Impossible! it would be noticed, and you would be ruined. I am going up stairs, it will be thought that I have some business in my apartment, and in about half an hour's time——Half an hour? Ah! that is too long.—It is requisite.—Would you have me dance attendance here a whole half hour?—I shall find it no less tedious than yourself, my lovely Countess; but indeed we should act childishly if we were to manage it otherwise. See! the Baron has already turned round several times, he watches us, he looks as if he was uneasy.—The Baron! the Baron! what business has he to trouble his head about what concerns us?—On account of

my being his son, he thinks himself entitled to look into my little affairs. How can it be helped? Every father and mother will assume that ridiculous pretension.

Jasmin no longer durst play on his fiddle; but I could hear him, true French singer-like, bawl out, "*Tandis que tout sommeille.*"

I am going, my beloved. I shall wait for you in my bed-room.—No, wait in the boudoir.—Why so?—Because it is prettier, more convenient.—Why, but—In the boudoir, sir, I tell you, I wish it to be in the boudoir.—But.—I insist upon it.—I, therefore, must obey. Now take care to make it half an hour.—Be it so.—Will you be as good as your word?—Yes, yes, I will.

I flew like an arrow. Get out, Jasmin, shut the doors after you, run to the bottom of the private staircase to wait for the lady who will soon come down. You have introduced her unperceived?—I have, sir.—Well, use the same precautions when you take her back; where is she?—Ah! sir, what a happy mortal you are! what a sweet woman she is!—Tell me, then, where she is?—We first entered the dressing-closet.—Go on!—You won't allow me time, sir!

she saw the boudoir, and would not proceed any farther. I left her in the dark, as you bade me.—That was right: put this light out too, I have no farther occasion for it; get you gone, and close the doors after you.

Close the doors after you! what a wise precaution! what a crack-brained fellow was I! I had forgot the Countess had the second key in her possession!

Replete with a fatal security, I crossed over my wife's apartment as quick as the surrounding darkness would permit me to trace my steps, and entered the blessed boudoir: dear mamma! my sweet friend! here you are then! the Chevalier de Florville at last enjoys the happiness of possessing you in his own house!—Yes, answered she in a stifled voice: How tenderly thankful must I feel! how I love you! how highly obliged do I feel.

Whilst addressing her so, I was feeling after her; a pair of officious arms encircled me, I was pressed against a gently agitated bosom, greedy lips sought mine, and repaid my burning kisses, I immediately presumed to venture more; far from opposing the least resistance, my fair friend seemed anxious only to hasten

the success of my bold attempts———her defeat and my triumph were soon complete.

Woe to them who are ignorant of it! such men as are favoured with an ardent imagination, will experience that there are certain moments when the feelings of happiness become so acute as to absorb every other; when the soul, greedy after one single object, and become frantic in consequence of the poignant desire of possessing that same object, will create one, and appropriate it to himself, though it were an entirely foreign object. The illusion then is so over-ruling, that no human faculty remains capacitated, by exercising its particular powers, to annul the said illusion; the memory then can no longer recollect, the mind is unable to reflect, neither can our judgment compare. Woe to him who is ignorant of it! yet, as it will be seen presently, I had occasion to regret having had one of these fits of delirium.

Oh, my stars! I hear a noise! Dearest mamma, make your escape!

How could she have run away? She was without a light, in a strange apartment, the windings whereof I myself was scarcely familiarised with. I wished to favour her flight;

and, laying hold of her hand, tried to reach the door of the dressing closet, but I had not time—the other door of the boudoir opened too soon. Madame de Lignolle, favoured rather too much by chance and love, which guided her rapid steps through the dark, was reaching the loving pair whom her approach frightened: I have found you at last, my dear, said she, kissing a hand which she had just caught hold of; but it was not my hand that she kissed.

The Marchioness, thus detained on a sudden, dared not move; whilst I, conscious of her apprehensions and killing embarrassment, hastened to throw myself between her and Madame de Lignolle—and, consequently, to cover with my body that which the Countess had seized, and a very useful limb of which she kept caressing most tenderly, without interruption.—I have found you at last, my dear, repeated she. Compelled to return an answer, I was so unjust, in my violent perturbation of mind, as to reproach her for having come before the appointed time.—Do you find that I am come too soon, retorted she: I observed the Baron to be entirely attentive to his game, could not conquer my impatience, and seized the op-

portunity to give him the slip.—You have acted wrong, madam; you ought not to have been in such a hurry; you should have waited as I had begged of you, and as you had promised. My father will perceive your being gone. We shall see him coming here—

Alas! I little thought I was speaking so true; he was hurrying on at that same moment. A loud scream escaped me: Dear mamma, you are ruined!

The Baron, with a lighted taper in his hand, stopped at the door. What a scene did he illumine! He, in the first place, who thought of finding only one female with his son, was not a little surprised at seeing two, who amicably held each other by the hand. Madame de Lignolle next; that good lady, equally angry, surprised, and ashamed, sufficiently displayed in her countenance, wherein were depicted several opposite jarring passions, that she could forgive neither the infidelity, of which, no doubt, I had been guilty, nor the insignificant caresses with which a moment before she had overwhelmed her rival, who, standing motionless, stuck to the wall, appeared to be a mere statue. However, you may well imagine, that,





*The Baron, with a lighted taper in his hand, stopped at the door.*

The Baron, with a lighted taper in his hand, stopped at the door.





of the four performers in this strange drama, I was not the least thunderstruck, when casting a stolen look upon the unfortunate statue, I recognised—I looked at her three times more before I could be persuaded that my senses had misled me so far—that woman, in whose arms I had fancied I possessed the most beautiful of her sex, was only a brunette, tolerably pretty! She whom I so recently idolised as Madame de B—, was no other than Justine!

Beauty! heavenly gift! offspring of Nature! and queen of this universe! permit one of your humble, respectful, but sincere subjects, to submit to your best judgment a reflection, which your enthusiastic worshippers will perhaps call a blasphemy. Since it is true that, sometimes heated by love, and occasionally cooled by disgust, imagination, ever active and inconstant, may at every moment, and a hundred times in a moment, either create, or, according to its fancy, can annul thee; tell me, what art thou in fact?—in what consists thy most attractive charm?—where does thy real power reside?

Wait a little, however. Perhaps it was something superior to Justine. That pretty shoe and stocking; that elegant and rich gown; that

superb hat, surmounted with a waving plume; a thousand other appendages, that *rouge* especially, that noble *rouge*, which never coloured plebeian cheeks, pray what does all that portend? Pray tell me. Most assuredly no part of that brilliant equipage belongs either to Madame de B—'s waiting woman, or to the priestess of the Vicomte's petite maison. Oh, Madame de Montdesir! behold my embarrassed state, and pity me. Was it under a recently true-made name that you have entered my premises? Have you, at the cost of some dupe, acquired the noble *de* which precedes it, and which I am proud of for your sake. Gently though—the lion's skin is not so dexterously put on, but a little bit of the informing ear may be discovered. In your court lady's attire, there is—I know not what—an affectation of delicacy, that speaks you to be no gentlewoman.

Well, everything duly examined, it was only Justine!

The cunning Countess had discovered as much; and, with a contemptuous look, surveyed, from head to foot, her unworthy rival.—You most likely are Madame de Montdesir, said she.

—Justine, who had just recovered her presence of mind, replied in a sarcastic tone: Ready to serve you, madam.—Madame perhaps is a married woman?—Quite so, madam, to all intents and purposes.—Is Madame's husband busily employed?—Alas! he does his utmost. And yours, madam?—He does nothing at all, replied the Countess, in an ill humour. But you are very bold to interrogate me! Be satisfied to answer those questions with which you are honoured. I was asking you what your husband did, what was his profession, what he is, in short?—What he is?—what he is?—why, he is—what yours is apparently, likewise, madam.

I must confess, that once more my behaviour towards Madame de Lignolle was reprehensible. This repartee of Justine was truly jocular, but I ought not to have burst out laughing at it in the presence of the Countess, as I did. To speak the truth, as I am now disposed to recount all that passed then, the little lady punished me most severely; for she gave me—yes, I believe it to be the fact—it was a slap on the face that she gave me!

One may easily guess that my father did not

remain a tranquil spectator of so scandalous a scene; but I do not deem it superfluous to relate in what manner he put an end to it, and avenged the offence that had been offered me. Monsieur de Belcour pulled the bell, which was answered by a footman, whom he ordered to light Madame de Montdesir to the street-door. He next addressed the Countess, saying: Madam, I may be three times as old as yourself, I am a father, and you are in my house, I therefore deem it incumbent upon me to tell you candidly, what I think of your conduct: it is so inconsiderate, (and you ought to thank me, if through a particular regard, I do not use a harsher expression,) it is so inconsiderate, that your extreme youth is the only excuse that can be alleged in your favour. Though my son may have mistresses, madam, it is not here that they meet; and never will a woman who retains the least idea of common decorum, select for her appointments with the Chevalier, his father's house, and his young wife's apartment. In short, madam, a female well brought up, a lady of quality especially, will be cautious never to use her lover, although he were culpable, and they should be by themselves, in



the manner you have treated yours, even in my presence.

Madame de Lignolle for awhile stood abashed. The Baron then continued, in a less severe tone: Whenever Madame la Comtesse, as a friend to Monsieur de Belcour, and to the Chevalier de Florville, will be pleased to pay a visit to them both at a time, she will do them high honour: but to detain you any longer to-day, madame, would be, in my opinion, to abuse your embarrassing situation. Go you, my son, into the saloon, tell the Baroness that Madame la Comtesse, who wishes to leave us immediately, requests she will see her home, and that she is waiting for her in her carriage. Permit me, madam, to see you down stairs.

The Countess, whom ill humour deprived of her proper senses, rejected my father's hand, saying: no, sir, I shall go down by myself. You turn me out of your house, added she, in that dictatorial tone which I never heard from my husband; but remember! you may come to my house some day! come, and you will see!

I could not hear what Monsieur de Belcour answered to this menace, which must have oc-

casioned great surprise. Anxious to make amends for the errors I had been guilty of, and to sooth my irritated father, I was hurrying to the Baroness, who, astonished at the abrupt departure of the Countess, asked me what was the occasion of it. I protested that Madame de Lignolle would relate, better than I could, all the particulars of the calamitous event which deprived me so soon of the pleasure of seeing her. Madame de Fonrose leaned on the Vicomte's arm to go down, and I attended them as far as the hall. From thence I could hear the impatient Countess returning unceasingly this only answer: the perfidious man! the ingrate mortal!

When I was left alone with my father, he returned to Sophia's apartment, and I followed him. He stopped facing the door of the boudoir: No living female this morning, said he, was to be allowed to enter these premises, and this very evening two women have been locked up in it!—The one that I know not, is no great things, I believe; but the other!—That Madame de Lignolle—I am frightened on her account! a woman at her time of life! a mere child, so enterprising, so bold? Wherefore must she

happen to be a person of rank, possessed of great wit, and handsome? I am frightened on her account, and on yours no less; I never saw a more lightheaded, imprudent, violent woman! Dread her; you yourself are too incautious, too petulant; she will expose you too much. Only consider how, during several hours, she has already known how to make you forget her, whose absence you had been lamenting during the whole forenoon! What! cannot the misfortunes, and the uncertain destiny of Sophia sufficiently engross your attention? Is it indispensable that several objects at a time should employ the activity of your soul, and the fickleness of your senses? Will you never be steady? Have the lessons you have received from adversity been insufficient? And if your wife, so charming, so unfortunately seduced, so respectable, even in her foibles, I am not afraid of saying so, your interesting wife, so deserving of being loved sincerely, tell me, is she destined to be united to the most inconstant of all husbands? Ah, Faublas! Faublas!

The Baron saw my tears run, and left me without offering a word of consolation. How tediously long did the evening appear to me!

and when bed-time was come, how painful did I feel, to be reduced, close to the apartment with two large beds, to occupy the room which contained only a very narrow one. It is to be confessed, however, that I was not so uncomfortable then as in the Bastille. In my prison, I would call Death to my assistance; at home, I invoked Sleep.

Come, Morpheus, come thou god of married men, what thou art continually doing for them all, deign to perform in my behalf, for a few hours only: drive from my couch tender inquietudes, impatient desires, consuming love; harbour me within thy peaceable bosom, summon near us, carelessness, sloth, languor, and indifference, dejection and disgust; above all things, convey into the very bottom of my soul, the entire forgetfulness of my beloved half. But when the light of day shall come to disperse the darkness of night, suffer not the Chevalier de Faublas to continue in a state so unnatural. Ah! I beseech thee, bid the morning dreams to come and caress his refreshed imagination; bid them to bring back to him a cherished image; allow him at day break to awake in the arms of Sophia.

God of illusion, thou hast never favoured me but with one dream, but shall I be the only single man who shall have derived consolation from a dream! To the youth whom thou favourest, to the novice whom thou enlightenest, do not your grossest impostures appear as sweet reality: yes, beneficent god, thou wilt have restored my fortitude; filled with new hopes, I shall rise to accompany you; I next will shut myself up, demand my wife of the whole universe; and if love will second me, thou shalt soon see me bring back to the temple of Hymen, the beauty the most capable of driving thee from within its walls.

Alas! wherefore was the conclusion of my invocation as ill suited as the famous harangue of that loquacious Nestor, to that most rancorous Achilles? A god is susceptible of feeling piqued the same as a hero: my unworthy petition was rejected, I enjoyed neither refreshing sleep nor agreeable dreams, but spent the whole night in lamenting a beloved object not being now at hand.

A letter that was brought to me the next morning, however, recruited my spirits; I here offer the contents to your perusal.

“You never allow, Monsieur le Chevalier, a poor woman time to recollect herself. I ought to be accustomed to your ways; yet I always suffer myself to be caught, owing to my memory not being very retentive, and to my being occasionally absent. You, meanwhile, should not have forgotten our former agreement, namely, that I should always discharge my errand first.

“Yesterday evening, you occasioned me to forget one of high importance; a certain great lady, whose very humble maid I was only, when you were thought to be her fathful attendant, sorry at my not being able to speak to you then, as I was commissioned so to do, desires me to write that she wishes to have a few moments’ conversation with you this very day. She will be at my house in two hours’ time. Come sooner, if you are desirous of our breakfasting tête-à-tête before she arrives. For my part, I should feel very happy if you would; for your manners are so engaging, that they are irresistible.

“Wholly yours, DE MONTDESIR.”

De Montdesir! it is now beyond a doubt, Justine now ranks with the nobility. Prosper-

ity brings a great change in one's manners; Justine now scorns being called by the same name as her ancestors. Her "wholly yours," nevertheless, I deem rather unbecoming: methinks the dear creature assumes a tone of superiority.—Why should she? I was born a nobleman, but she is handsome. Has the ever renovated question been hitherto decided: whether we were allowed to be more proud on account of having fortuitously been favoured with a high birth and great wealth, than if chance had dispensed upon us beauty and personal graces? Justine, upon some occasions, will act a better part than many a duchess; neither durst I boast of being her equal.—Give it up, Faublas, humble thyself, man, renounce a puerile vanity, overlook and forgive the temporary lofty one of thy conqueror.—Let me read over a certain passage in her letter: "a great lady whose very humble maid, etc." Madame de B—, most certainly! The lady wants to see me in a stranger's house! Madame de B—wishes to speak to me in private! heavenly powers! if love could restore her to me as tender—Jasmin?—Sir.—Is anybody waiting for an answer?—There is, sir.—Tell him that I am going di-

rectly.—Why, but she will only be there in two hours.—What does that signify! Justine will be at home, we shall have some chat together; I am low spirited, that will cheer me a little—tell the messenger that I shall follow him close.

In fact I reached the Palais-Royal nearly as soon as the messenger. What struck me at Madame de Montdesir's, was, not so much the beauty of her apartment; the tasteful elegant furniture, the impudent look of her young manservant, and of her ugly waiting woman, as the true air of protection with which Justine honoured me. Reclined on a sofa, she was playing with an Angola cat, when my name was called in. Ha! ha! said she, in a listless accent; well! let him walk in; and without either rising, or letting go her darling puss, added: is it you, Chevalier? it is very early; however, you will not incommode me; I have had but very little sleep, and shall not be sorry in the least at having company. She next addressed her *fille de chambre*: are not you going to set this dressing-table to rights? I really can't tell how you manage it, but you leave everything undone. She spoke to me when my turn was come: there is an arm-chair, be seated, and let



us have a little gossip. The waiting woman once more attracted her notice. That will do, I have no patience with you, take yourself off. If anybody should come, let them be told that I am not at home.—You appointed your mantua-maker, madam?—Dear me! how stupid you are, miss! when I say somebody, can I mean that creature? is that dress-maker anyone to mention? Bid her to wait.—But madam, if she should want to be gone?—Bid her wait, that's her province, and yours is to hold your tongue. Away with you, begone.

At first I was struck dumb with surprise; but at last I could not suppress a loud burst of laughter. Tell me, my beauty, how long since have you assumed those princely airs?—She replied: it is very proper with such people, and in their presence, not to lose sight of one's consequence. Be thou not angry therefore at my——What! how so? Will Justine presume to *thou* me?—Why not? Since Madame de Montdesir likes you, and since you love her.—You are right, indeed, I have been saying as much to myself less than half an hour ago, while perusing your familiar epistle. But, permit me to urge an observation: did you not love

me formerly?—Formerly! for shame! I did love you indeed—as much as a wretched *filie de chambre* could love.—And now?—Now my affection is no less, but that affection is more delicious, more dignified; for you must know that I am settled, I now have a *settlement* of my own.—I wish you joy, madam, and in fact everything here announces opulence. Do inform me by what means you have acquired so brilliant a fortune.—Most willingly; but I have much more interesting news to impart first.

I allowed Justine to proceed with her narrative, and found her language to be very correct. It appeared to me, that she had improved prodigiously during the last four months, and in consequence, I wondered less at the mistake which, on the preceding evening, had abused my senses. I durst not affirm, however, that I was entirely free from prepossession in the present instance; a pretty dishabille will sometimes act more powerfully than is thought of; neither can they who have never experienced it, imagine how many new attractions a more elegant dress will add to the charms, already familiar, of a young female who had neglected her mode of decking

herself out. I shall even say here what many men perhaps do not know, but that, which for certain no female is ignorant of, namely, that oftentimes a coquette, either forsaken or betrayed, has only needed, in order to bring back the disgusted or inconstant lover, to add a flower to her head-dress, a fringe to her waist-band, or a flounce to her petticoat. It can't be helped! I am sorry for it, myself; but love is amused with those trifles; he is a child, who must be supplied with toys. At any rate, I hope you will understand my meaning, that you will comprehend what sort of love I am speaking of, when I mention the name of Justine collectively.

Don't you imagine, nevertheless, that I have entirely forgotten Monsieur de Valbrun. Yet, to speak the truth, I only thought of him and my promise so late that Madame de Montdesir had no cause left either to wonder at it or to complain; but it was solely in consequence of my bad memory, and not at all a voluntary mishap, for were it so, I would confess it as candidly.

Now that we were disengaged and at liberty to enter into a confidential discourse I desired

Madame de Montdesir to let me know the nature of the Vicomte's concern in her favour; she, without the least hesitation, told me all the particulars. Monsieur de Valbrun, soon tired of his petite maison, but more attached daily to his mistress, had furnished an apartment for Justine, to whom he allowed twenty-five louis-d'ors per month, besides paying her rent, frequently likewise making her presents, and sharing in the expenses of her housekeeping; that was what the lady termed having a settlement. As soon as I knew her to be to all intents and purposes no better than a woman in keeping, I begged of her most seriously to consider me only as a chance visitor, and pulled out of my pocket a few louis, which I insisted upon her accepting. I cannot forbear submitting upon the present circumstance, to my readers, an observation illustrative of our manners. When, in former times, Justine, waiting-woman to the Marchioness, and confined in the obscurity of her servile situation, was willing, in her leisure hours, generously to surrender her person to whomsoever she appeared handsome, I did not scruple loving her gratuitously; nay, I considered as a mere effect of my liberality,

the trifling presents with which I occasionally rewarded her complaisant affection. Now that Madame de Montdesir, a stipendiary of the Vicomte, brought her charms to market, I should have thought it indelicate to fatigue those charms without allowing the owner a remuneration. All among our young nobility who are possessed of principles, will reason and behave in this same manner; hence it proceeds, that for a female who relies upon her beauty to procure a fortune, the most difficult part does not consist in finding out half-a-hundred coxcombs, whom she may persuade of her being a meritorious object, but an honourable man who will take it into his head to set a price upon her accomplishments.

Be it as it may, I paid Madame de Montdesir, and made so bold as to call for breakfast, which was brought up by the saucy-looking footman. The fellow was of a handsome figure, and I could immediately perceive that his mistress did not address him so peevishly and with those haughty airs which she exhibited when she spoke to her waiting-woman. I am observing you all this while, Madame de Montdesir, and see that you do not pay sufficient attention

to what you are about, that you are forgetful of that consequence which you had been mentioning, now that you are speaking to your footman. If I am not widely mistaken, you retain in your actual state of grandeur, the original disinterested propensities of your former situation in life! Justine, this young gentleman puts me in mind of La Jeunesse—Ah! my dear Vicomte, take care of yourself; look sharp! henceforth you alone will be entitled to keep the watch, for I protest that in future I shall have nothing to do with your kept mistress.—But let us give up speaking of Madame de Montdesir; methinks I can hear Madame de B—.

This lady did not make her entrance the same way I had made mine. I saw her make her appearance on a sudden in the room which Madame de Montdesir had just left. I ran and threw myself at her feet, which I embraced. The Marchioness stooped to give me a kiss, but seeing that I was rising with the intent of repaying the compliment, she drew back a couple of paces, only presenting me her hand through mere civility, but with that air, which far from soliciting a caress, seemed to command respect.

For my part, delighted at holding within mine that hand which I had cherished for such a length of time, I was fully sensible, while covering it with burning kisses, that ever deserving of being loved, she was too pretty to inspire only respect or friendship. Madame de Montdesir came forward to pay her obeisance to Madame de B—, who received her as she formerly was in the habit of welcoming Justine. I am satisfied, my girl, said she, with your zeal, and the skilful and expeditious manner with which you have attended to my commands; you know me, and shall not have to complain of my want of gratitude. You may go now; shut the door after you, that no one may come to interrupt us.

No sooner had she obeyed than I endeavoured to express how thankful I was for Madame de B—'s kind visit, and the excess of my joy. Chevalier, retorted the Marchioness, withdrawing her hand, which most likely I squeezed rather too hard, you are not going to hear me, through false delicacy, pretend to deny what thousands of people will soon know, and will come to inform you of: it is owing to me that the gates of the Bastille have been thrown

open to you. Perhaps Montdesir has told you to what degree, in consequence of my being a constant attendant at court during four long months, my credit there has been increased; and I can assure you, my good friend, that the consideration of your unhappy situation, which I was anxious to relieve, was not the least inducement that prompted me to persevere in my ambitious projects. I have now attained the highest degree of favour which a courtier can aim at, and if your liberation, at first sued for in vain almost daily, but finally obtained, notwithstanding a thousand obstacles and as many enemies, has not signalised as soon as I could have wished the whole extent of my interest, I may boast of its being the most unequivocal proof of my credit; neither am I afraid to confess that your release is the most gratifying success I ever wished for. Do not believe, however, that the good offices of your best friend are to stop there. I am well aware that you do not value liberty as the chief blessing: I know that Faublas, although unceasingly caressed by several sweethearts, cannot be happy so long as he languishes separated from the woman he has always cherished. I intend to restore her to



him; I am determined to find out du Portail's place of residence, though it were at the furthest end of the universe.—Oh, my benefactress! exclaimed I; oh, my generous friend!—The Marchioness drew back her hand as I was preparing to lay hold of it again, and proceeded as follows:

And when I shall have succeeded in bringing together a charming couple, I shall presume, for the sake of their mutual happiness, to attempt a bolder stroke still, I shall endeavour, if Faublas is willing to repay my care by reposing confidence in me, and if he allows me to enlighten his inexperience by my advice, I shall endeavour to guard him against the allurements of my sex and the wanderings of his own. I shall exert my utmost powers to make him sensible that a young man, favoured as he has been by Hymen, must derive happiness from his being a faithful husband. Imagine not that I am ignorant of the difficulties attendant upon such an undertaking. No, I can foretell that from you I am to expect the greatest obstacles. I am no stranger to your impatient vivacity, which seldom allows you time to resist perilous opportunities; I know, likewise, that

your fiery imagination will frequently induce you to go in quest of them. These, Faublas, are the enemies I dread above the angry fits of your giddy Countess, more than the skilful instigations of her intriguing friend, the Baroness.—I here interrupted Madame de B—: What! are you acquainted with those ladies?—How came you to know?—Monsieur de Valbrun, she replied, leaves very few secrets untold to Madame de Montdesir, who, for three months past keeps none from me.

The looks which Madame de B— cast upon me, while laying a decided stress on the words “keeps none from me,” would not allow me to question the meaning she intended to convey. I could not help blushing; the Marchioness noticed my confused state, and said to me:

Let us have done with Justine for the present, we shall speak about her presently; but it is proper before that, I should acquaint you with Madame de Fonrose’s true character: neither shall I be sorry to let you know how Madame de Lignolle is known to me.

The little Countess, proud of her attractions, which she thinks are matchless; of her wit, which she is told is genuine; of her birth, the

legitimacy whereof she is not apprised of being brought into question; of the immense fortune and title she is in hopes of inheriting; presuming on account of those advantages, for which she is obliged to her weak aunt and the most imbecile of husbands, the fair little Countess thinks herself entitled to claim adoration and respect. Giddy, imperious, obstinate, whimsical, and jealous, she has every imperfection of a spoilt child. She will always evince being less actuated by the gratification of proving agreeable, than by the happiness of commanding; she will be found the most troublesome mistress, as she is known to be the most impertinent of all women: ere long, she will take one of her footmen for her paramour, in like manner as she has made a slave of her husband. I warrant you, she is no more capable of disguising her extravagant opinions, than of curbing her unruly passions. You accordingly will hear her continually striving to justify and defend, by her nonsensical talk the blunders she may have previously committed; I shall even go so far as to assert, that with the inexhaustible stock of conceit which she is known to be possessed of, in vain would she struggle to

mend the combined vices of nature and education.

With regard to the Baroness, she is well known; for which reason no one can have the least regard for her. Her scandalous behaviour early in life brought her husband to an untimely grave. He was a very worthy character; the only fault he deserved to be reproached with was to have tried, in his elevated rank, to inspire his wife with plebeian virtues. The noble lady, in consequence, when in a humour to crack her jokes, always called him "le philosophe de la rue Saint Denis." As soon as her husband was dead, Madame de Fonrose being at full liberty, hastened to confirm the opinion which she had already established. She has been seen to rise above decorum so ornamental to her sex, and in every circumstance, with stoical effrontery, to maintain her notorious character. In less than ten years' time her conquests had become so numerous, that for fear of forgetting some of them, she has wisely determined, of late, to publish a list of them. The name of your father ranks the thousandth in this endless vocabulary, and will probably be followed by a thousand more, besides your

own. What renders it more surprising still is the invincible boldness of that woman, capable of putting up with the uninterrupted favours of so many people that she welcomes them all, and never rejects any one. Never will the first new-comer make room for the last in that Mesalina's good graces. She will keep thirty at a time, if thirty are willing to stop. In case some one should dislike this order of things, he withdraws himself without complaining. If the vacuum which he has left should happen to be found out it is immediately filled up; but, invariably, should the deserter return after six months' absence, he is always sure of being well received. Do not imagine, however, that such minute details alone are sufficient to occupy the whole capacity of the Baroness's head. Her intriguing genius requires occupation abroad. Vexed at the leisure hours which her own amours leave heavy on her hands, her only consolation consists in favouring the amours of her acquaintances. Go to her house on a day when she receives company, and you will see her surrounded by groups of young men whom she has in training, and of youthful lasses whom she introduces.

Such are the female enemies which, assisted by you, I intend to oppose; yet I should think it advisable, for a while, to let them enjoy the pleasure of triumphing over you, and swell the immense catalogue of those men whom Madame de Fonrose has made happy. That woman too busily engaged already, will not be able to detain more than one single day a youth, whom I know to be endowed with feelings, and I hope, with delicacy. As for Madame de Lignolle, I shall allow her to keep you for a few weeks. Since you stand in absolute want of an object of amusement, I prefer, to any other, a giddy child, who will inspire you with a transient whim at most. Be you, then, in your leisure hours, the doll which she will be fond of; but remember, that as soon as I shall have succeeded in bringing Sophia back, you must give up the Countess forever.

I promised the Marchioness to behave as she directed; thanked her for the interest she showed me, and engaged to love my wife alone, as soon as she was restored to me. I felt much chagrin, however, at Madame de B—insisting upon my remaining faithful to Sophia, and in order that no one should find fault with the lively dis-

pleasure I felt involuntarily, I hasten to inform everyone that the Marchioness, at that period, more than ever, shone in all the lustre of youth and beauty. Her skin appeared to me more dazzling fair; her rosy complexion more blooming, my memory pointed out to me other charms which my imagination depicted as being brought to a much higher degree of perfection; true, indeed, I was forced to acknowledge at the same time, there was a something more steady, more decent in her still enchanting countenance, and in her whole person, still completely graceful, a dignified air inimical to amorous approaches. I could feel exasperated: twenty times I was on the point of recalling to her those recollections which agitated my mind, the painful remembrances of my former happiness; but as many times she silenced me by a look that seemed to say: pity my distress, and respect your friend.

I was forced to abide by the injunction, and to listen a little longer without interrupting. She entered into a particular detail of the means she could now command, and proposed going to find out Madame de Faublas; and when she had convinced me, she thought, that

no one could discover where Sophia was if Madame de B— did not, she spoke to me about Justine. That young woman, said she, has engaged to throw no obstacle in my way, and to allow me to make a *good boy* of you; but I doubt her being able constantly to adhere to so involuntary a determination, I therefore beg you will condescend not to put her to too severe a trial. You cannot, said she in a more serious tone, in common decency continue as intimate with her as you have been for a long time past. An intrigue of that sort is totally unbecoming of you, my good friend. You are neither so foolish as to intend making Madame de Montdesir's fortune, nor base enough to pay her gratuitous visits. It seems to be the general opinion now-a-days, that the rich libertine who goes unceasingly cheapening those girls, is less contemptible than the obscure coxcomb who courts their favour; but it has not yet been determined whether it is more absurd to pay very dear for their good graces which the purchaser cares very little for, than it appears disgraceful to obtain them by cringing, when in want of gold to become the best bidder. What has been truly ascertained is, that whoever is so



unfortunate as to be fond of the company of women of that class, must soon, unless he takes care, forfeit besides his property, the esteem of all honourable people, and ruin his constitution, and finally blush at his own conduct.

I candidly apprised the Marchioness of Madame de Montdesir having violated her rash vows that very morning: I even recounted to her by means of what sweet illusion, in order to procure one of the most happy moments in my life, I had, on the preceding day, embellished Justine with all the attractions of Madame de B—. I observed the Marchioness to blush repeatedly, and heard her sigh several times, in consequence of my unpardonable error. Emboldened by her confused state, I presumed to risk a gentle caress, and an insidious question. Do you ever think of me, dear mamma? does never a soft recollection?—Madame de B—having already recovered her composure, interrupted me: Ought you to ask whether I think of you? Does not all that I say to you evince that, continually bearing in mind your dearest interest, your friend——Is it true, then, that you are my friend? Alas! you no longer are but a friend then?—Faublas, you ought to

congratulate me.—Dear mamma! I can only complain.—Faublas, you should have said madam.—Madam! to you? I shall never get accustomed to it.—It is requisite you should though, Faublas.—Ma—Madame, my name is Florville.—So much the better, I thank you for your condescension.—Dearest mamma! how happy!—My good friend, you should say madam—What happiness does that name put me in mind of!—Let us speak of something else, and have done with that—With what exquisite pleasure I remember the amiable Vicomte who was called by that name!—Pray, once more, let us speak of something else.—Oh! that I was Mademoiselle du Portail still!—Chevalier, introduce some other topic.—Oh! that we were still going to Saint Cloud together!

My stars! it is twelve already, exclaimed she, looking at her watch. Before I leave you, however, Florville, I want to send you on an errand. She drew from her pocket-book a paper, which she delivered into my hands. I have petitioned myself the Secretary of State for this letter, which recalls back to France my most mortal enemy; have the goodness to direct it to Count Rosambert, at Brussels, where

he now is. Inform him that he is at liberty, under his own name, to return to the metropolis, and even to make his appearance at court. I give you leave to let him know that she whom he had affronted, and who needed only to speak a single word to have his estates and property confiscated, to have him dismissed from his majesty's service and made an exile for life, has just obtained his restoration to his former rank and honours. He must not expect, however, my renouncing to be revenged, but it will be a becoming revenge that I propose taking. His base offence will not provoke a base chastisement. To inflict a noble punishment upon a man, who, forgetful of his high rank, has presumed to insult me grossly, will be to inflict a twofold punishment. Adieu, my friend.—Adieu, madam——shall I be deprived long of the happiness of seeing you again?—No, Florville, I intend coming here sometimes.—Say, often.—Well, often, if I have it in my power.—And soon?—As soon as possible.—Within a few days?—Justine will let you know when. Adieu, my friend.

When Madame de B—was gone, I called Madame de Montdesir.—Tell me, said I, where

does that passage lead to through which I saw the Marchioness come in and make her exit? —To the jeweller's next door, whom the lady has paid most liberally to allow its being made. This is to answer the same purpose as the boudoir at the milliner's—Oh! no, Justine, this is not for the same purpose, far from it.—How so! has our mistress been shy?—She has. —Perhaps it is on account of your being a married man?—Do you think so?—Who can tell? I know that for my part it would occasion me a deal of vexation, and that I should be very angry at first. But we poor women cannot bear malice long. I should soon make it up.—So then you are of opinion that the Marchioness —Will soon be appeased. Make yourself easy. Besides added she, in a careless tone, I know that you are not without some consolation left you.

Madame de Montdesir, in fact, seemed much disposed to offer me some, but I summoned fortitude enough to do without.

Jasmin was waiting for me with great impatience. He informed me that Madame de Fonrose had just sent to beg of me to call upon her. I first wrote a short letter to Count

Rosambert, which I had carried to the post-office, and immediately went to meet the Baroness.

When the Chevalier de Florville's name was called in, Madame de Fonrose let an exclamation of joy escape her. She took me to her dressing closet, placed me facing a looking-glass, and rang for one of her maids, who, less handsome, though equally clever as Justine, by means of using some ribbon and a few flowers, soon dressed my head in as elegant a manner as any young lady could have wished. I next was decked in a lilac-coloured India silk gown, and petticoat of the same, and to complete the metamorphosis my feet were confined in a pair of small shoes from the Cadran Bleu. Madame de Fonrose dismissed the waiting-woman, and kissed me repeatedly, protesting at the same time that I looked as lovely as most persons of the sex. I was just going, imprudently, to return her flattering discourse and tender caresses, when a servant in waiting bawled out from the door, Monsieur de Belcour.

The Baroness, apprehensive lest my father should enter the dressing closet, shut the door, and received him in the next room. I am come,

said the Baron, to beg your pardon, load you with reproaches, and express my regret—we were obliged yesterday to part rather suddenly: I suffered much in consequence, but it was your own fault entirely; you had introduced to me the most frolicsome little creature——Say a charming woman, sir, handsome, lively, witty——That may be, madam, but——Have done with your but——I must confess, continued he, that I feel some inquietude in my son embarking in a new intrigue. It would be too grievous for me to think that his wife will be gone forever.——For God's sake, Baron, make yourself easy! when she returns she will have her husband back again.—It will be too late; perhaps he will not love her so much; yet, indeed, his Sophia deserves to be happy.—There you are again! I wonder at you! According to your maxim, it would appear as if the perpetual adorations alone of her husband can constitute the happiness of a wife; and you have brought from the country the obsolete notion that every good husband, plebeian like, must overwhelm his wife with incessant love. What uninhabited part of the world are you come from, my dear sir?

Don't you know that gentlemen in the present time marry only that they may keep a house and procure an heir to their estate?—And that is the reason why, madam, those gentlemen you are speaking of, after some years' marriage, have neither estate, house, nor children of their own.—Indeed, you are the most entertaining man in the world when you wish to take the trouble.—Then, turning towards a footman: Let the carriage be got ready.—Don't you dine at home, resumed my father.—No, I am prevented.—I intended to spend the evening with you.—I am very sorry, but it is not in my power.—May I take the liberty, without being impertinent, to ask where you intend going?—I shall dine with the little Countess.—Are you going alone?—No.—With my son, perhaps?—With the Chevalier? By no means.—You are cracking your jokes.—I give you my word of honour it is not your son who is to accompany me.—Who then?—A young person, whom I do not believe you ever heard of.—What is her name?—Mademoiselle de Brumont.—De Brumont! no, I do not know her. Is she to come and fetch you, or will you go for her?—Why, but—I cannot tell, I am waiting.—Will you

stop late at Madame de Lignolle's?—I had thought of coming home early, that I might sup with you.—That was a bright thought, an excellent idea. I would be denied to every one if you did not dread finding a tête-à-tête tedious.—I would only apprehend finding it too short.—He then kissed her hand.

A servant now came in to let the Baroness know that her carriage was ready. Mademoiselle de Brumont, eager to join her mistress, found that the Baron's chat with his, lasted too long.—Yes, my Sophia, I must beg your pardon upon the occasion; Faublas was ruminating on the means of speedily dismissing his father.

Agatha, the expeditious chamber-maid, who had dressed my hair so well, consented to receive a louis d'or, and to show me some mercy. She led me through a back staircase into the yard, where I found the carriage, and then went to tell her mistress that Mademoiselle de Brumont was just arrived, but that upon being informed that Madame de Fonrose was engaged, and unwilling to receive company, she was waiting below for the Baroness.

My message was delivered very punctually: I soon saw Madame de Fonrose coming down,



and leaning upon my father's arm. He cast an inquisitive look at me in the coach, but I was so uncivil as to hide my face with my fan.

We drove off. The Baroness laughed heartily; she congratulated me on the result of my stratagem. She took hold of my hand, gently squeezed it, honoured me with several tender glances, and more than once repeated that my father might be considered as a most amiable man, but that I was the most charming woman she had ever seen. Madame de Fonrose was kind enough to warn me that the Countess, very angry still, no doubt, might at first treat me with no kind reception, but, added she, you soothe her, as all women are to be soothed, by oaths, encomiums, and caresses.

The Count and Countess were together, when we sent in our names. Indeed it is her! said the Count. Madame de Lignolle, yielded to her first impulse, rose, and opened her arms to me; but on a sudden, actuated by a contrary sentiment, she threw herself back on the chair, and cried out: I will not see her. I was going away, the Baroness prevented me, and said: I have brought her back to you very repentant,

and sorry for what has happened: I can assure you, she longs to be deserving of forgiveness.—Forgiveness! for such deep ingratitude!—To be sure, said M. de Lignolle, this young lady has presumed to behave here in a very strange manner. To stop only two or three days, and then to give us the slip without saying a word! she ought at least to have given notice to the Countess.—To me, sir? notice! that would have been acting most wisely, indeed. You are speaking nonsense, sir: I am not to be given notice to because I am not to be left.—It is to be owned, however, that Mademoiselle was at liberty; she has as much right of suing for her discharge, as you had to dismiss her.—But in such a case, I shall repeat it over again, notice should be given on both sides, some days beforehand.—I beg, sir, you will keep your observations to yourself. Perhaps they might divert me at another time, but now I confess I find them tedious. The Count held his tongue, and I began to speak: I confess, madam, that I have behaved towards you in an improper manner; but appearances made me look more blameable than I am in reality.—How so! Do you pretend to say, that you have not been unfaith-

ful?—And for four months' continuance, interrupted the Count. Four months without even letting us hear from you! The Countess is very right, that was not behaving well.—Something may, nevertheless, be said in her favour, observed Madame de Fonrose: I have heard from good authority, that those four months' absence appeared to her very tedious, and that if she had been allowed to come and see you, she most heartily would have availed herself of the permission.—In vain would you attempt, madam, to apologise for her; you know that she has betrayed me!—To be sure, said M. de Lignolle, it is a kind of treason.—She has sacrificed me!—Yes, indeed, she has truly sacrificed us, if she went to take another situation.—That is exactly what she has done, resumed the Countess.—I confess, madam, I have acted wrong, but——You hear what she says, interrupted she again, lifting up to the ceiling her pretty little hands, with which she next covered her eyes. You hear her plain enough! she went to take another situation, she don't deny it.—I beg, madam, you will only listen to what I have to say more——She went to take another situation! repeated the Countess, in doleful ac-

cents: and her eyes were filled with tears.—Was it with a lady, asked the Count?—Undoubtedly, exclaimed Madame de Lignolle, with great vivacity; what queer questions you will ask, sir!—He then addressed me: Who is the lady with whom you engaged?—What is that to you? interrupted the Countess again. It little signifies in what capacity even.—Is she a lady of quality, asked the husband.—As much so as my groom.—And what is she?—What is she? what is she, retorted the Countess, whose anger was heightened at every interrogation of her inquisitive husband; she is a dealer in bad practices and nonsensical jokes.—And what is her name?—Madame de Lignolle exclaimed: Oh! I know what her name is; but I wish you would tell me, Mademoiselle.—Madam, I beg you will excuse me,——No shuffling excuse, Mademoiselle, I insist upon it!—Well, madam, her name is Montdesir.—Montdesir! I was sure of it.—Montdesir!—She has left me for another! She went to live with a Madame Montdesir!

The Countess again wept bitterly.

The Baroness said to me in a whisper: She now sheds tears, she presently will be soothed,

she soon will forgive. Kneel before her, and beg her pardon.

I did so. I embraced her knees; and, while Madame de Fonrose was administering to her, in a low tone of voice, some consoling discourse, the Count addressed me, frequently intermingling some of the most gentle upbraidings with parental remonstrances: You are very young, Mademoiselle de Brumont, and are endowed with both personal attractions, and an agreeable wit; you, nevertheless, must not expect to mend your circumstances if you are fickle-minded, if you will not attach yourself to anyone, if you accept of a situation anywhere, without being disposed to settle with any family. Whom did you prefer to us? Tell me, I pray. A plebeian, a mean character, a philosopher, I would lay a bet. Were not you a thousand times more comfortable here? I do not believe I was ever deficient in showing respect to a young lady for whom I had conceived the highest esteem; as for my wife, she was quite fond of you. In the first place, without speaking of manifold other advantages, you enjoyed one in our house, which is seldom to be met with elsewhere, namely, of guessing charades every

day, and of composing as many yourself as you pleased.

The grief of the Countess continued not proof against the last observations of her husband. Monsieur de Lignolle had scarcely done speaking, but Madame fell into convulsive fits of inextinguishable laughter. On a sudden, deep sorrow was replaced by sportful joy on that charming visage, where smiles and tears were intermixed. I could easily perceive that Madame de Fonrose, the same as myself, would have paid very dear to be at liberty to laugh as loud as the Countess; but I was equally afraid as herself of creating strange suspicions in the mind of her husband, who was looking at us, and who must already feel much surprised at his lady's deep grief and unbounded joy. The Count, in fact, noticed my state of perturbation, and addressed me as follows, to quiet me: You look quite abashed, mademoiselle; but nothing of all this must surprise you. No affection whatever of the soul escapes me. During the time of your absence, the good humour of my wife had undergone a striking alteration, but I discovered there was a possibility of making her cheerful, and spoke to her about

charades. She no sooner heard the word, than she burst out laughing ready to split her sides. I repeated the experiment several times, and always with a similar success. You have witnessed it yourself; she has been laughing this quarter of an hour without interruption. Look at her now! the fit redoubles!

The Countess, in fact, burst out laughing again, and Madame de Fonrose gave up all constraint. I was incapable of resisting the temptation; neither could M. de Lignolle see three people so merry without joining with us. Our boisterous laughing must have been heard all over the neighbourhood.

Notwithstanding Mademoiselle de Brumont was made half crazy, the Chevalier de Faublas retained the use of his senses. His greedy lips pressed her lily arm, as smooth as ivory, and with a caressing hand, he gently squeezed a pair of pretty knees.

Grant her forgiveness, would Madame de Fonrose say, who was continually looking at me, and could see every detail of the ludicrous pantomime.

Grant her forgiveness, would the husband re-echo, who, not satisfied with applauding my ac-

tions by his looks and gestures, stooped twice to whisper into my ear these very encouraging words: Go on! go on! do not get tired; persevere, you will gain your point.

Forgive me, exclaimed I, in my turn, with tender accent, and in a supplicating voice: forgive me, for I repent, and I love you.—I love you, likewise, answered she, embracing me: And I forgive you, added she, embracing me again, but you must promise never to visit that Madame de Montdesir again.—I never will.—That you will never settle but with me.—Never.—That being the case, I forgive you! I love you! and kiss you! and, if you are as good as your word, I will love and kiss you as long as I live!—Well, then, exclaimed the Count, delighted at his lady's being in such good spirits, since Madame loves, kisses, and forgives you, I wish also to forgive, love, and kiss you.

He then honoured me with several kisses.—And I, too, said Madame de Fonrose, must love, forgive, and kiss you, for I have been highly entertained by you for the last half hour.—Who will now pretend to say, resumed the Count, with a triumphant air, that charades are of no utility whatever? See how they have



put us all in good humour, in what manner a reconciliation has taken place so soon as——

The Countess interrupted him: The Count is speaking of charades; would you believe it, Mademoiselle de Brumont? He has not yet been able to guess our last.—The reason why, is, because it is not exact.—That I call a substantial reason, exclaimed Madame de Fonrose:—How comes it that your charade was incorrect?

I pointed to the Countess, and replied: This lady was the real author.—True, answered the latter, but it was at your instigation.—It does not signify, resumed the Baroness, since it is not exact, you must begin over again.—We intend as much, madam, said the Countess.—Undoubtedly, observed M. de Lignolle, you must begin over again.—Will that give you any satisfaction, sir?—Most assuredly, madam, I should be highly pleased. I even wish I were allowed to help you.—I return you a thousand thanks; I will have no other tutor, in future, than Mademoiselle de Brumont. Besides, sir, perhaps it might be to no purpose that you would attempt to become mine.—You may be in the right! I have already composed above

five hundred poems, in enigmas and charades. It would be an arduous task for me to have to go over the first rudiments again.—I then said to him: Give me leave to observe, sir, that my lady Countess is young, inquisitive, and anxious to learn.—Well, then, mademoiselle, you want no help-mate to teach her all that it is requisite she should know. I am thoroughly persuaded that you are fully capacitated to teach your pupil excellent principles, and when you have taught her the first elements, I willingly engage to finish—By no means; the pleasure and glory of her education I shall not allow anyone but myself to enjoy.—Please yourself—that, however, will not prevent my feeling a lively interest for the progress of your pupil.—What you are so kind as to say, sir, will certainly prove a great encouragement to me, and I promise to give my lady Countess the best lessons in my power.—Do, mademoiselle, do.—I shall compose many a charade with her, I assure you.—Do, mademoiselle, do.—So, then, sir, I may attend to those lectures, without running the risk of displeasing you.—Indeed, madam, you may, and all day long, if you like it.—Now then, I am satisfied! I rather scru-

pled at so doing, at first, because I was afraid of assuming a privilege that I had no right to; but, since I have obtained your permission, I am quite easy in my mind.—So much the better; but I invite you to begin over again that which you had only sketched; for I certainly should have found it out if it had been completed—come, mademoiselle, go to work, no *mauvaise honte*; begin over again, and do things better.—I shall try whether I cannot, sir.—Do your best, and be as quick as possible.—Directly, if my lady Countess likes.—No, not quite so soon, quoth the Baroness, let us dine first, you will have plenty of time. I intend leaving you here a fortnight.

I thought I had not heard her right: What! a fortnight, do you say?—Why, truly, you find that it is very short?—Do not wonder at it, but I never could obtain a longer period.—Obtain! I have done my utmost, mademoiselle, for I knew how desirous you were of prolonging your stay with the Countess.—Certainly—but—But your parents were inflexible—You say, madam, that my parents—Would never grant above a fortnight.—You say that my parents have granted me—Yes,

only a fortnight; nothing could induce them to deprive themselves for a longer period of the pleasure of your company at home——A fortnight! Madame la Baronne, are you sure?—I am sure, mademoiselle, they will not allow you to stop any longer; make your arrangements in consequence; I shall take you back in a fortnight; we have settled it so.—Settled it!—Yes mademoiselle, I am bound in honour——Settled! madam?—Irrevocably so, mademoiselle. In the meantime I shall come and see you every day, as you may well expect. I shall visit your friends almost daily, likewise, so that you will hear of them as frequently as they will of you. I am to sup with one of them this evening.—I knew of that; with one of my grandparents, if I mistake not.—You are very right, mademoiselle; I shall mention you to him, and let him know about your absence from home.—I shall be very much obliged to you.—I doubt not but, at first, this long separation will alarm him, as it has the rest, but I shall reconcile him to the idea.—That will be doing me service.—I warrant you he will not be angry.—I will take your word.

I could but be very much surprised at the

artful and bold manner in which the Baroness had introduced, and was going to leave me with the Countess, whether I would or not, as might be said. I shall not presume to say that I was sorry for it, few people would give me credit; but, at least, oh, my Sophia, I can protest that I mentally determined at that same moment to continue upon good terms with Madame de B—, that I might, according to future circumstances, be speedily made acquainted with the result of her inquisitive researches, and behave in a proper manner.

The Count, who had heard every word of my dialogue with Madame de Fonrose, asked whether my friends were now residing in Paris. The Baroness replied that they had come incog., for particular reasons she was acquainted with, but which she must not reveal.

I was seated at table between the Count and his lady; every now and then the Countess would catch hold of my hand from under the tablecloth, while our knees stuck close to each other's. M. de Lignolle must have noticed our being frequently absent if Madame de Fonrose, continually on the watch and ever complaisant, had not kept up the conversation, and many a time

have put us on our guard, and awakened us from our reveries. When the dessert was brought up, however, I was no longer allowed with the least propriety to continue silent.

The Baroness, whether she wished to divert me from the object which engrossed too much of my attention, or that she took pleasure in plaguing me a little, took it into her head all on a sudden to strike a blow at me more difficult still to parry than all the former ones had been. Apropos, said she, you undoubtedly have heard of the grand piece of news: the Chevalier de Faublas has been released from the Bastille.—Who! the Chevalier de Faublas? said the Count.—Don't you recollect the history of that gay youngster, who dressed in woman's clothes—Got into the Marquis de B—'s hotel.—Yes, I do.—And that young rake has been set at liberty! Why don't they confine him for life?—You are too severe, Count; he is said to be a most amiable youth.—A notorious libertine who ought to have been flogged in the public market-place.—The Baroness then asked me: You don't speak, Mademoiselle de Brumont; are you of the same opinion as the Count?—No, madam, not quite so, no—that Chevalier

de Faublas whom you are speaking of I should deem excusable, if he be still very young, unless he has been guilty of some of these heinous offences—He has committed enormities, vociferated M. de Lignolle. You are not informed of his history, I find, mademoiselle; I shall recount it to you: First of all, he left off the clothes of his own sex, and pretending to be a female, went into the bed of the Marchioness de B—, almost under the nose of her husband. Was not that abominable?—Permit me to stop you here, sir; this does not appear to me to be probable in the least. Is it possible that a man should look so much like a female as to be mistaken for one?—The case is not ordinary; yet there have been instances of it.—If you were not so positive, said the Countess, I would not believe it.—You must though, for it is a matter of fact. At any rate, that Marquis de B— is no better than a silly fool, with his physiognomical science. It is the knowledge of the human heart which is requisite.—I interrupted him again: It appears to me, sir, that if you had been in the place of the ill-fated Marquis, that Chevalier de Faublas could not have made a dupe of you.—Oh, you may rest assured of that.

I am an observer, I am acquainted with the human heart, and no affection of the soul escapes me.—We know that well, said the Baroness; but returning to our young rake, you will be much astonished when I inform you that he is obliged to the Marchioness for his liberation.—To Madame de B—! cried the Count.—To Madame de B—! did I exclaim myself, shamming extraordinary surprise.—To her very self, resumed the Baroness, coolly.—Everybody will have it so.—The Countess got up abruptly. What! said she to me, was it the Marchioness?—

She spoke so loud and so quick, she looked so surprised, uneasy and chagrined, that fearful lest she should address to me some imprudent reproach or some dangerous question, I hastened to interrupt her: apply to the Baroness, said I; what are you asking me about? A story that I know nothing of—a mere fable; for how can it be imagined that the Marchioness ever dared—I speak no more than the truth. I cannot but find it very natural that a young inexperienced female, a pure virgin, void of passions and blameless, should deem an event of the kind quite scandalous, and that her inno-



cent heart should induce her not to believe it. I cannot even help blaming the Countess, who has some knowledge of the world, to have been just now inclined to question her *demoiselle de compagnie*, so inexperienced a person as that young lady must be, relative to a certain matter. But that M. de Lignolle, a man of parts, a man of sense, who has a thorough knowledge of court, of women especially, that M. de Lignolle, a profound observer, an excellent judge, should call a fable a fact, very uncommon no doubt, but not unprecedented, and which will appear most probable to him who is no stranger to the corrupt morals of the present age: is more than I can conceive.—But allow that I should have made a particular study of the disposition of Madame de B—, whom I have no more than heard of.—I, most unfortunately, have often met her in my way.—I might dispute her native and acquired accomplishments; but most of the young court nobility will have it that she is a far more insinuating, artful and skilful dissembler than any of them: they are to be believed. Some will allow that she is witty, others that she is possessed of great talents; all agree generally that

she was intended by nature to intrigue; some again wonder at ambition exercising such a tyrannical empire over a heart which they think was made to indulge milder passions, while others, seeing her continually attending business of high importance, are at a loss to conceive owing to what miracle she has any time left to carry on her amorous connections. What everyone cannot be tired with admiring in her, is a continual medley of that audacity which distinguishes the strong, and of that cunning which seems to be the portion of the weak only. She sometimes astonishes either her enemies or her rivals by the boldness of her doings; she also will frequently harrass them with tranquil patience and endless perseverance. She at times will act like an angry tigress, that rushes upon and overpowers the huntsman; or as the hypocritical cat lurking for whole hours to seize upon its prey. As a proof of her extraordinary capability, I shall only quote the manner in which she rose again triumphant, subsequent to her last dreadful fall.—When her intrigue with the Chevalier de Faublas made so much noise, everyone thought she was ruined; she alone retained spirits enough not to despair.

I should attempt in vain to tell you by what means she succeeded to persuade her cornuted and discontented husband, that he was not made a fool of; but certain it is that they now live upon good terms. This reconciliation, however, is the most trifling success she had in view; as soon as she had pacified her credulous husband, she then thought of liberating her charming lover. How did she go to work for this purpose, do you know? Let me tell you.

M. de—who had many friends on account of his being possessed of some little merit, and a very considerable fortune, had been in love with her for a long time in vain, and with no better success, had strove to become a member of the administration. The Marchioness joined the party that procured M. de—'s appointment; after a hard struggle, which lasted four months, she had the minister dismissed, frightened one of the candidates, imposed upon another, and the fortunate competitor whom she served was at last appointed to fill up the high office. His benefactress then scrupled not to become his mistress.—You appear to be astonished at that, Mademoiselle de Brumont?—Alas! it was so, the fair victim resigned herself—she most gen-

erously has surrendered . Thus has Madame de B—recovered her former credit, which increases every day. By this means the Chevalier de Faublas is let loose again upon the wide world to play some of his infamous tricks, if we do not keep a watchful eye over him.

Madame de Fonrose at last held her tongue ; and as she only wished to puzzle me, she had occasion to congratulate herself respecting the fatal piece of news ; fatal it was, for it cut me to the quick. However, when I reflected within myself, I thought it rather improbable that the adorer of Sophia, and the lover of the Countess, should be in love with Madame de B—. I nevertheless could hear from the bottom of my heart, a sweet voice crying out to me, that the Marchioness should have kept me in prison. In my excessive displeasure, I presumed to blame my friend for having done too much to serve me. Are those consoling moralists right then, who maintain in their daily publications that men are naturally ungrateful ?

Madame de Lignolle, displeased at my sorrow, which might easily be noticed, said aloud : you look very grave, Mademoiselle de Brumont.

—So she does, observed the Count. I returned no answer to the Countess, because the Baroness, so apt to guess at, and so quick in preventing the imprudent discourse of her friend, had already whispered to her, no doubt, all that she thought could pacify and make her keep silent. I seized the opportunity to address M. de Lignolle, and to impart a great secret to him. Sir, said I, if my memory serves me right, you have, some time since, expressed a wish that nothing relative to amorous topics should ever be spoken in the presence of your lady. That is very true, replied he: but whenever the name of that libertine is introduced, I am thrown off my guard, grow irritated, and am forgetful of my resolutions. I must return you thanks, however, for your good advice, which I shall abide by; I shall now speak of something else. He was most cruelly as good as his word, for he obliged me the whole evening to guess charades and to listen to long dissertations on the affections of the soul.

The Baroness withdrew at ten o'clock, to go and sup with my grand-parent, as she called him. At twelve, M. de Lignolle wished a good night to the Countess, and a sound sleep to

Mademoiselle de Brumont. Out of those two contradictory wishes, one only could be fulfilled; the Countess spent a good night, precisely because Mademoiselle de Brumont slept but little.

Do not wonder at it, ye who remember that yesterday evening and this morning I had been rather busily engaged with Justine. Think of my too long confinement, think that the economical diet of celibacy, rigourously observed during one hundred and twenty killing days, must have prepared me to stand in a proper manner, the multifarious excesses of several happy nights.

You too, unhappy lovers, who, on account of your having found satiety in the arms of your beloved, can no longer conceive a happiness too much above your strength, receive, besides my evidence, a salutary advice, and take courage; get confined in the Bastille, stay there four months only, and when you get out again, you will see what you will be able to perform; with what eagerness you will fly to the knees of your mistress! Ah! how many times will you say to them: I love you, if they speak the words only once! Ah! how handsome you will find

them on your return, if you do but find them faithful!

Mine was, and swore she would continue so forever. I, for my part made her so easy in that respect, that on the next morning, all her jealous suspicions had vanished. We breakfasted most cheerfully together, as no third person was present to interrupt us. M. de Lignolle, prior to his departure for Versailles, whither he was going to spend a few days, recommended my keeping constant company with his wife, and to take great care of her.

It turned out, however, that she took care of me; her little hands dressed my hair, and adjusted my garments. True indeed I was not accoutred the most dextrously; yet I, in return, through gratitude, very unskilfully to be sure, but quite in style, returned similar services to those she had rendered me. The whole forenoon, was spent in that pleasing occupation. Number, if you possibly can, the moments of absence that prolonged our toils and the frolics that interrupted them. Madame de Lignolle's natural liveliness seemed to be redoubled; could Faublas, whom you know, behave more rationally than he did? Figure to

yourselves our childish joy, whimsical caresses, and boisterous transports. Imagine to what degree those freaks may have been entertaining, and our tricks frolicsome; our garrulous quarrels, our silent fights. Represent to yourselves our interesting sulky fits, and the voluptuousness of our reconciliation: Respectful companion, I have been playing my mistress an impertinent trick; and more infallibly to draw upon myself the punishment which I deserved, I pretended to make my escape. The Countess, who saw me running away hastened to follow me, and rushed close to my heels into the dark alcove, where I seemed desirous of hiding myself: an exclamation of hers announces that I am found out, *mais le vainqueur tout-à-coup vaincu, reconnaît trop tard le piège qu'on lui tendait, il tombe et demande grace; je reste inexorable, et je donne un baiser.* Oh! you, whoever you may be, whom those sports alarm, if in spite of your severity, you condescend at least to be found equitable, judge us not according to the rigorous law by which men are governed; I am not yet eighteen, and the Countess is hardly sixteen; we are still children.



Madame de Lignolle had not wished to be denied to every comer. We received in the course of the afternoon a visit from Madame de Fonrose, who brought me news of my father; and that of the Marchioness d'Armincours, whom her niece had apprised of Mademoiselle de Brumont's return. The good aunt, delighted at seeing me again, overwhelmed me with compliments. I had inspired her with great esteem; she had not forgotten that I combined with the pretty common advantage of knowing, the rare talent of explaining everything, and that in an embarrassing circumstance, I had most powerfully assisted her, in giving her Eleanor\* requisite instructions. The old Marchioness loved me so dearly, and loaded me with so many caresses, that I could not, without ingratitude, find her visit too long. I observed, that the Baroness who most likely did not do me justice, was endeavouring to prevail upon the good aunt, to go and sup with her; but when she perceived that her intreaties were superfluous, she determined to stop with us herself. Both our guests left us at twelve; the same

\* Remember this was the christian name of the Countess : it will be wanted hereafter.

pretty chambermaid who had dressed me, hastened to undo her work, and the female friend of the Countess, resumed his office as her lover.

When I say the Countess's friend, I am perfectly right. They knew in the family, I was no longer her companion only. At any rate, I firmly believe, that upon a similar occasion, every nobleman might, without degrading himself, have filled a situation like mine. Why! in the morning, to preside at the lady's toilet, in the afternoon to chat with her in her boudoir, and to enter her bed at night, I see nothing in that, which a youth highly born would find hard to do, or might not honourably perform. For my part, I know that I fulfilled the duty of my office with pleasure, and void from the apprehension of derogating from my nobility. In every respect, I found myself quite as comfortable at Madame de Lignolle's, as at my own home.

As at my own home!—every now and then, but not continually. No, father, no. Notwithstanding, two days only had elapsed since we parted, I wanted to see you again. Oh, my Sophia! I was anxious to call at Justine's, to enquire whether Madame de B— had heard of

you, and the very idea of the troubles that you endured, embittered my reprehensible felicity.

It was on account of my wife, that at day break, I had a serious quarrel with my mistress. I believe you are weeping, cried out the wondering Countess; what is the matter with you? To confess that I was lamenting the absence of Sophia, would have been acting most cruelly; I preferred uttering an officious falsehood: I grieve, my Eleanor, on account of my being obliged to leave you for a few hours.—Leave me! what for?—To pay a visit.—To whom?—Not to my father, for he would not let me go, and I wish to return: but to my sister.—To your sister! my beloved; you need not be in a hurry.—It cannot be postponed; I must see her to-day.—Must you?—Indeed I must.—Are you sure?—Very sure.—Well then, I shall go with you.—What a queer idea! would you have us be seen together in the streets of Paris? If some one was to know me?—We shall let down the blinds.—Be it so, but must not we get out and in again? Besides, could I, with any propriety take you to the convent? what would it look like!—I shall wait in the street—Don't give it a thought.—So you will not allow me?

—I would with all my heart, but——You impose upon me—My sweet pretty dear, can you believe it?—I do: you intend playing me some foul trick.—Eleanor!—It is not to your sister's you are going, but to the infamous Marchioness, or, perhaps, to that little hussy, de Montdesir.—My dearest Eleanor!—In case you should have any appointments, you shall not fulfil them; I forbid your going out.—You forbid me!—Yes, I do forbid you.—Madam, assume those airs with M. de Lignolle, so long as he will allow you; as for me, I declare I will not put up with them, but will go directly.—And I declare, sir, that you shall not go out at all—I shall not?—No.—We shall see then.

I was about jumping out of bed; with her right hand she caught hold of my hair, and with her left pulled the bell so violently that the wire broke. Her maids being frightened came running up, when she cried out to them: Tell the Swiss\* to keep the gates of the hotel exactly closed, and not to let out any of my female attendants.

This mode of keeping within doors a lover appeared to me so novel that I was forced to

\* The nobility in France had Swiss instead of porters.

laugh at it. My good humour pleased the Countess, who burst into laughter also. This delirium of joy lasted some minutes; after which we got up, and when I was dressed we began to quarrel again.

Eleanor, I am going; I give you my word of honour that I shall return within two hours.—Mademoiselle de Brumont, take my word, my Swiss will not let you go out.—Are you really in earnest, madam?—Quite in earnest, sir.—Countess, I shall not attempt to force the passage, because, adding an act of imprudence to that you have already committed, would be notoriously exposing you; but remember the constraint you put upon me; think that you will not always have it in your power to keep your lover at home in spite of himself; and that, when once he is free, he will delay in returning to resume a yoke that you have rendered too heavy.—Ah the monster! he threatens to forsake me! Faublas, if you do not return, I shall fetch you back; I will go to all your mistresses, successively—to Madame de Montdesir, to slap her face; to the Marchioness, to claim you from her husband; even to your wife, if requisite, to declare that I am your wife, likewise—yes,

your wife!——that M. de Lignolle has only married my fortune——it is you who have truly married me——you alone, my dear, you know it well! Wherefore do you wish to go out, and become unfaithful? While you were in the Bastille I had no appointment with any one——my sole occupation was to call on you, feel impatient, and groan! Is it Madame de B——who expects you? Confess it, and I shall forgive you, provided you do not go. What advantage has that Madame de B—— over me that you give her the preference? She is beautiful, but I am handsome? Is she endowed with talents?——you are not aware of all mine——I sing well! dance better still! and, if you wish it, will immediately perform on my piano all the sonatas of Hedelmann and Clementi! Is she possessed of wit? I have my share; if she loves you, I love you more?——I am younger! more blooming! more amiable! I tell you so——believe me——you laugh, Faublas!——Well, do not go out, and we shall laugh, chat, and play together!——we shall run after one another, exchange kisses, fight, and amuse ourselves as we did yesterday! Stop with me, my beloved; I promise you this day will appear as

short as the preceeding one!—All you say, madam, is of no avail. You keep me by compulsion: but take care your prisoner does not make his escape; for, upon being liberated from his fetters, he will break them asunder.—Dare you repeat?—Put my courage to so dreadful a trial, and you will see, perfidious youth! I shall go in pursuit of you everywhere; shall surprise you with one of my rivals——will kill her!——kill you!——and kill myself!——and to the last moment of my existence, at least, shall prove that I adore you, ungrateful as you are! Great God! where am I? I no longer know myself—Faublas, my dear, do not be angry; do not go out—you will not speak—you push me away from you——ah, forgive me, I beg of you——see, look, I weep, I am on my knees before you!

I felt moved; I helped her up and comforted her. We entered into a kind of negotiation, and a capitulation took place. I obtained that the gates should be left open, but she obtained that I should not go out.

On the following day, I felt my inquietude to increase; and determined to see Justine, whatever might be the consequence; I spoke to

the Countess about my sister. The endless dispute was getting hot, when a loud rap at the street door, announced the return of the master of the hotel. M. de Lignolle came running to the apartment of his wife, and cried out from a distance: congratulate me, ladies, I have brought from Versailles the certificate of a pension of six thousand livres.—For whom, asked the Countess.—For myself, answered he, with an air of great satisfaction.—I am very glad of it, sir, since you look so highly pleased, but what is a pension of six thousand francs to you?—I could not obtain more.—You don't comprehend me, resumed she, with great composure—Far from complaining of the smallness of the pension, sir, at your having petitioned for it, you who were possessed of about twelve hundred thousand livres in landed property, and to whom I have brought twice as much for my marriage portion.—One is never too rich, madam.—Ah! sir, so many good folks are not sufficiently so! Why not leave the court's bounty to reach those who are in want of it?—True, replied the Count, rubbing his hands, there were a number of amateurs: I am not the only one who has been favoured. The first



was d'Apremont, you know him.—One of his estates brings him sixty thousand livres per annum.—De Versenil.—He is a governor of a province—D'Herival——His uncle, formerly a secretary of state, has overloaded him with riches, which he squanders away, and with honours of which he is undeserving. There is Flainville—The immense wealth bequeathed to him, he has made fourfold, by means of stock-jobbing.—Next comes a M. de Saint-Prée—but no, I am wrong, that one has obtained nothing.—What a pity, said I, he is a worthy man.—Do you know him?—I do, madam. He has been in the army, is a man of courage and of merit. You could not hear of the many wounds with which he is covered, or of his misfortunes, without feeling highly interested. I don't suppose he is rich.—Quite the reverse, he is very poor.—His eldest son, however, has been admitted at l'Ecole Militaire, and his youngest daughter at St. Cyr.—Has he a large family?—Three more of his children are nearly starving with the father in a sorry village in Languedoc.—Now tell me, is not it dreadful that courtiers who are in opulence, should deprive that unfortunate family of their honourable

and last resource:—This said, she turned towards her husband. Are you not ashamed?—Ashamed! at what? If that gentleman is in distress, let him complain; if he is forgotten, let him show himself. What is he doing in the country; why does he not come to Versailles, and be seen at the Œil-de-bœuf; am I to go and fetch him?—He has served a few campaigns; what then? have not thousands of officers been wounded also? at court, it is useless to make an exhibition of scars: you must produce friends, have patience, and become troublesome.—If M. de St. Prée is not deficient in those respects, he will come in at his turn.—The Countess replied with great warmth: but had it not been for you, his turn was come.—M. de Lignolle, with a tone of superiority, returned: how childish! you have not the least knowledge of the world. Admitting, that to make room for that gentleman, I had withdrawn, others less delicate than myself would have kept him at a distance. Besides, if people were checked by a multiplicity of petty particular considerations, no one would ever think of himself.

Madame de Lignolle crimsoned, turned pale, and stamped on the floor: Brumont, you hear

him! I have no patience with such reasonings; I could jump out of my skin!—Sir, as you rightly observe, I have no knowledge of the world, nor of the human heart: nor, thank God, of the art of fine reasoning; but I listen to my conscience, which cries out to me, that you have taken the ministers by surprise, imposed upon the king, and robbed the distressed.—That expression, madam——Yes, sir, robbed! Her husband wanted to leave the room, she kept him back, and with apparent composure, proceeded as follows: If within a few days, you do not contrive to resign your pension in favour of M. de Saint-Prée, I protest that I will take care to have six thousand livres forwarded to him yearly, through an indirect channel, by way of a restitution.—Just as you please, madam, you are enabled to do so without pinching much: it would be at most one third part of the annual sum you have reserved to yourself for pin-money.—Do not flatter yourself, sir, I shall not touch that part of my income. Although I am not to be called to an account, I shall repeat what I have already told you a hundred times; I would never forgive myself, if I were foolishly to spend twenty thousand

francs in gew-gaws of dress, when there are poor wretches on your estate that want bread, my savings I shall dispose of in a way better suited to my feelings. With regard to the debt to M. de Saint-Prée, which you have just contracted, you may discharge it with those monies we have in common. If you should leave me to settle that business, I shall pledge my diamonds; and when I shall have sent them to the Mont-de-Piété for you, we shall see whether you will not redeem them.—No, madam.—No! dare you say no to me! I shall repeat it over again, I will have it so, and so it shall be. Monsieur le Comte, let us live at peace, believe me, don't put me at defiance; I have relatives, I have friends, the right is on my side, a separation might easily be obtained; I know you can do without me, but the loss of my fortune, might occasion you bitter regret. Hear me, Brumont, you see before your eyes the most unfeeling and avaricious mortal. I am forced to quarrel with him every day, to prevent his committing acts of greediness or of injustice. We have been man and wife these six months, and I have not yet had the satisfaction once of seeing him assist a man in dis-

tress! He is never happy but when he can hoard up; gold is his God! He has but lately been adding to his fortune, which he is contriving means to increase; and for whose sake, pray? of distant relations; for he knows not whether there are any poor in existence: and as for children, he will never get any, unless a charade—

The Countess, who had been very angry for some time, on a sudden burst into laughter, ready to split her sides. Subsequent to a moment's reflection, however, she resumed: Unless a charade should be a substitute for a beloved child!—He is right, by the by, to like them, the making of them costs him nothing. But now that we are speaking of children, sir, let me tell you that I long to see my family again. Last autumn I wished to go and take a tour to Gatinois, you have kept me here to pay visits, and I have been informed that you have taken a trip there unknown to me. Now that I am made acquainted with your disposition, that mysterious journey alarms me. I insist upon the condition of my tenants undergoing no alteration. I do not wish the vassals of the Marchioness d'Armincours to have to complain

of their having become those of the Countess de Lignolle. My good people! my aunt has brought me up among you; your honourable toils procured me joy, and my most agreeable occupation was to share in your innocent sports. She taught you to cherish me; she taught me to respect you; she taught me to derive happiness from yours, to be proud of your love, and rich in your prosperity. She would often say to me, (I delight at the recollection,) Eleanor, don't you find it very gratifying, at your time of life, to have as many children as there are inhabitants in this village? Yes, they are my children; yes, my good people, I wish to bring back your mother to you; she will not appear too old yet, but I hope that now, as when she was not so full grown, you will feel gratified at her encouraging your labour, preparing your festivals, dancing at your balls, presiding at your banquets, rewarding your laborious sons, and crowning your sweet Rosicres.

Not long before, the Countess was laughing; I could now see her eyes filling up with tears.

Sir, continued she, with great impetuosity, I shall start to-morrow.—To-morrow! madam?

that is too soon; the season—I beg your pardon, sir, the approaching spring will bring us fine weather: it is beautiful already. I shall set off to-morrow for my estate in Gatinois, stop there a few days, come back to fetch my aunt, whose business here will be completely settled, and then she and I shall proceed to Franche-Comté. I have a family also in that country—But, madam—I shall go to-morrow, I am determined. I shall take Mademoiselle de Brumont with me. If you are ready, you will accompany us. Are you otherwise engaged? Please yourself. I shall not want, either for my occupations or amusements, a man equally incapable of contributing to the happiness, or compassionating the miseries of anyone.

She immediately ordered her trunks and travelling carriage to be got ready. M. de Lignolle withdrew, discontented, but without offering any further opposition.

Meanwhile, the Countess was shedding tears. I could see the most tender concern depicted on her countenance, and the fire of wrath to be extinct. My heart was penetrated with delicious feelings, such as those with which her own

seemed to be moved. Sensibility, the offspring of Providence, and sometimes of Adverse Fortune, sister to Compassion, and parent to Beneficence, is, I imagine, one of those virtues, which, for the everlasting propagation of our species, has been granted to us men, that we might be loved, and to you, our sweet companions, that you should, at every period of life, and at all times, be possessed of infallible means of pleasing us. I have always seen, that there was not a figure ever so old, but which might be made to reassume a moving expression; and its admirable power extends so far, that whilst embellishing the least handsome, it adds a thousand charms to the most beauteous. Judge then, how much, at that moment, Madame de Lignolle appeared to me more dazzling with attractions and youth, and wonder less at being told, that a cause, identically deserving of encomiums, produced reprehensible effects.

A few minutes after he had left us, M. de Lignolle returned to his lady's apartment. Most luckily, I had bolted the door.—You have locked yourselves in, cried he.—We have, sir.—Why so?—Because we have our charade to begin over again. Is that a reason why I should



not be let in?—I verily believe it is. I have already told you, sir, that I did not like to be disturbed when I was composing. Call again in a quarter of an hour, my lesson, perhaps, will be at an end.

That lesson, however, did not last so long; but after having received and given one, the tutor and the disciple had a little explanation, which it was not proper everyone should overhear.

Eleanor, my charming friend, I have but just now heard you with transport delivering to your husband a lecture on virtues which I idolise, but that are unknown to him. You are become dearer to me on that account, you appear to me prettier still.—Why, my aunt has always told me the same; she has constantly repeated to me, that a look of kindness would deck a female much better, than all the hats in *Mademoiselle Bertin's* shop. She was right, since my lover can find it so. Oh! how pleased I am, cried she, jumping through joy, how happy I am to be good, since it makes me look more amiable in your estimation! I promise, Faublas, to be more and more so every day; I am imperious and irritable; people might

think I am ill-tempered, though at bottom there is not a better-natured woman in the world. I am worth my weight in gold. Believe me, every day you will find me possessed of some new accomplishment. You will see. I tell you so. To-morrow I shall take you with me into the country, are you glad of it?—I am delighted, my little dear.—Wherefore little? Not so very little, I think. Don't you find that I have grown in the last four months?—An inch at least.—Oh! I hope I shall grow again. Yes, I shall grow, be sure of it. That will give you pleasure, will it not.—Great pleasure, most assuredly. To resume the question you were just now asking me, I am delighted at going into the country with you; but if you wish to have me go to-morrow, you must allow me to go to Adelaide's this day, and to go there unaccompanied.

This brought on the renewal of our dispute, which this once ended to my advantage; I even had the good fortune to make the Countess sensible of the impropriety of her lending me her carriage. A hackney coach was sent for. I directed the coachman, to take me to Adelaide's convent, but at a few paces from the

hotel, I begged of my Phæton to take me incog. to Justine's.

The lazy girl was still in bed, gossiping with M. de Valbrun. As soon, however, as Mademoiselle de Brumont was announced, they both cried aloud to her: walk in, I was welcomed in a friendly manner. I cannot tell whether the Vicomte quite free from jealousy, was as delighted at seeing me in his mistress's bed-room, as he was pleased to declare he was, but I know well, that Madame de Montdesir, made unsuccessful endeavours to prevent M. de Valbrun seeing, that she preferred M. de Faublas to him. The poor girl, still a novice in her line of business, could not do justice to her part. I confess that it was not with a view of assisting her that I spoke to her of my own affairs. She appeared sorry to inform me that she had no intelligence to impart relative to the Marchioness, but she promised to have her apprised of my going to——with Madame de Lignolle. The Vicomte engaged not to let the Baroness know in what place he met with me.

From the Palais Royal I went to the rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, to my sister's convent.

To make my appearance before her in my new disguise would have caused great affliction to my dear Adelaide, and would have been committing a useless act of imprudence. I scribbled a note, which I had conveyed by the portress, to inform Mademoiselle de Faublas that her brother was going to spend a few days in the country.

Madame de Lignolle and I did really set out on the next day at an early hour. The Count, having some business to attend to, would make us hope that it was impossible for him to join us for a whole week. I shall not attempt to describe my young mistress's raving joy on being on the road with me; neither shall I tell how amused I was during my journey; but you are well aware that one never finds it tedious to *courir la poste* with a beloved mistress. It was near five o'clock when we arrived. We had not dined; I longed to sit down to table, but the Countess was anxious to look into some arrangements which she deemed essential. We began by examining the apartment that had been prepared for her. She ordered a second bed to be put up close to hers. It was so decided that, for the future, Mademoiselle de

Brumont should have a bed wherever Madame de Lignolle should have hers placed.

In the meantime the report of our arrival had been spread over all the villages on the estate of the Countess; and on the same evening there was a great concourse of visitors at the castle. Madame de Lignolle did not receive the tedious and ceremonious visits of petty country nobles, proud of their antique nothingness, nor of enriched plebeians, more vain still of their newly-acquired privileges; her numerous court was composed entirely of those men who are almost everywhere kept at a distance, and everywhere respectable, whom most of the "gentry" have persuaded that the first of all arts was an ignoble occupation. Less credulous, and more happy, each of the honest husbandmen that I saw appeared to be inwardly conscious of his merits in particular, and, in general, to be proud of his profession. All of them in the presence of Madame de Lignolle displayed a modest assurance; all of them had become men again since a woman had protected them. All, indiscriminately, while congratulating themselves upon the Countess's return, lamented not seeing the Marchioness, and prayed

to heaven to repay the niece for all the benefits which the aunt had overwhelmed them with. Crowding round my charming mistress, the wives loaded her with thanks and praises, the young maids covered her with flowers, and the children would kiss her wearing apparel. Madame de Lignolle, deserving of the affection which she inspired, had remembered all their names. To aged Thibant she addressed her kind thanks; to good Nichola an obliging enquiry; a flattering compliment to the young Adele; and a sweet caress to little Lucas. She wished to know all about their private concerns, if prosperous. You would have taken her for an affectionate mother, just returned into the bosom of her happy family.

Eleanor, said I, my dear Eleanor, you deserve to be the object of general cheerfulness, for you appear to enjoy it.—So I do, I assure you; my emotion is truly heartfelt. Never, during the whole winter, had any tragedy produced upon me so poignant an effect. Tell me, then, wherefore so many opulent people, who, on their estates, do no good to any one, will go when in Paris to the theatres to be moved by fictitious calamities?—They do not understand

them, my dearest; at our theatres plebeians alone shed tears. The fashionable gentry do not even know when the performers are on the stage; they go to the house to point their glasses at each other from the boxes. You may well imagine they are not entertained; but for a few hours they become forgetful of the ennui which devours them.—You are perfectly right, I think I have noticed as much several times; I accordingly have fixed upon a determination—I shall spend most of the year in the country, and lay out in good deeds the money that a box would cost me at each of the three houses.—Ah! my beloved, how short the days will appear then! Ah! if you go continually in search of the unhappy, you will not have a moment to lose. You will be a gainer also, I believe, on the score of pleasure; interesting scenes will meet you. How could you not be continually amused and affected, when you will have unceasingly, either tears to wipe off, or transports of joy to moderate?—Well, once more I am determined I shall continue among my tenants in the country—provided my Faublas does not leave me, provided he be always faithful to me.—How could I be otherwise,

my dearest? Where could I find, with more virtues, so many—

I could not say more. Oh! my Sophia! a recollection prevented me from ending the sentence.

So then you will ever love me, resumed *Madame de Lignolle*, in a low tone of voice?—Ever.—You will never think of any other?—Of you alone.—But only see, my lady Countess, how pretty those country lasses are!—How handsome those young fellows look! I should feel inclined to think there are many children got here, and fine children too, the fathers look so happy in their situation.—There is no doubt of it. Commerce, so fatal to the human species, on account of the dangerous toils it occasions, the long sea voyages it requires, the frequent wars it necessitates; commerce daily deprives agriculture of labouring hands. A destructive calamity which it brings in its train, namely, luxury, will also carry off from our land one-tenth part of the choicest men to plunge them forever into the abyss of capital towns, wherein whole generations are extinct. What have we left for the cultivation of our deserted corn-fields? A few miserable slaves, condemned



to be oppressed by the higher classes, who, by means of an iniquitous distribution, having reserved for themselves idleness and respect, leave for their vassals poverty and contempt, labour and taxes. If distress is injurious to the mind, grief is not less so to the body. Gnawing sorrows stamp upon the countenance everlasting marks, more hideous than the wrinkles of old age, or the deformities of ugliness, marks of reprobation, which an ill-fated parent transmits to his posterity, equally condemned, like himself, to all manner of opprobrium. Thus it will inevitably occur that the individual is bastardised at the same time that the species is reduced. Wherever you see the peasantry to be in small numbers and ugly, you may boldly affirm that they are made miserable.

While I was holding out with the Countess a conversation which was duly calculated to enhance the esteem and regard I bore her; upwards of a hundred covers had been laid upon an immense round table on the green, which was speedily illumined. The musicians were just arrived, and the impatient youth of both sexes were waiting for the signal. Madame de Lignolle took a genteel young man by the hand;

I followed her example, and the ball commenced.

The supper hour came too soon, to the great sorrow of the dancing master and for the lovers; but to the great satisfaction of fathers and mothers, who upon similar occasions, are more eager to sit down to table than their children are. Madame de Lignolle wished me to assist her in doing the honours of the feast. We withdrew, however, after all the guests having drank the health of their hostess, and of her beloved aunt; the old men began their songs to Bacchus, and the young, hymns to the God of Love.

I must tell you, as a secret not to be repeated, that rather fatigued in consequence of the exertion I had gone through the two preceding nights, I relished during the whole course of this one, no other pleasure but that of quietly sleeping by the side of my wondering Eleanor. M. de Lignolle, had he been in my place, would have done neither more nor less; therefore far from being proud of it, I plead guilty. But make yourselves easy: love, always righteous, had decided that on the next morning my youthful mistress was to be amply indemnified.

It was not twelve o'clock; for several hours already the lively Countess had dragged me through every part of her park; a *jardin Anglais* invited us to enjoy some repose in one of its shady bowers; a cool breeze gently agitated the foliage of the cedar and willow tree.

A thousand birds perched on their interminate branches sang the pleasures of spring; a rivulet, alternately rapid or tardy in its course, caressed with its silver stream the flowers that grew on its shores. At the bottom of a dark harbour formed by the interwoven wreaths of lilac, roses, and honeysuckle, was a mysterious grotto.

I was drawing close to it when, judge of my surprise, I read at the entrance this inscription: *Grotte des Charades*. *Grotte des Charades!* exclaimed I.— *Grotte des Charades!* repeated the Countess: we need not ask, added she, with a loud burst of laughter, whether the Count has been here last autumn. She then resumed in a majestic tone: *Grotte des Charades!* will you dare to enter it, Faublas? And her eyes, full of fire, invited me to make amends for the last night. I had the audacity to penetrate with her into that place of delight; a bed of moss

seemed to have been prepared there by the hands of Venus, and it received the two lovers. During some minutes we heard neither the birds, nor the zephyrs, nor the stream. The sweet grotto had just been rendered deserving of its appellation, which perhaps we were going to confirm, when the approach of a profane intruder compelled us to suspend our transports.

It was M. de Lignolle who surprised us by his sudden arrival. Ha! ha! said he, you were busily engaged at work here!—Yes, sir, have not you given us leave?—Undoubtedly.—It is immaterial to you then in what place.—Exactly so. But, madam, you look quite confused; did I come *mal-à-propos*?—*Mal-à-propos*! no, not quite. We are thinking of you—How so? what! while composing a charade?—We never make one but you are in it for something.—How so?—How so, I cannot tell. At any rate, make yourself easy: it is a mere trifle, which ought to concern you a little, but about which you are not concerned in the least.—Why, faith, madam, this is too difficult. I don't comprehend you.—Very proper it should be so, perhaps at a future period you will know more about it. Now let us have done with charades.

You have settled your business very expeditiously; you are come very quick.—I have settled nothing. I intend going away the day after to-morrow. I am come because I longed to see you first, and next to revisit this estate, which for a number of years has been very ill managed.—Very ill, you will never manage it better. I do not wish any change to take place.—I would wish to reform.—No reformation. I tell you so beforehand, I will not suffer it.—Sir, added she, as she left the grotto, you perhaps have a charade to compose, we don't wish to disturb you.—Don't let me interrupt you madam, yours—Is finished, we perhaps were going to begin a second, but here you come like a jealous man!—I beg of you, madam, it is proper I should withdraw, if the place pleases you.—By no means, stop here, replied she with a laugh, it will please another time: don't be uneasy about it, we shall be no losers.

Madame de Lignolle proposed my accompanying her in the afternoon to go and visit her tenants. In the nearest village we entered the house of one of her farmers. Bastien, said she, you did not come to sup with me, but I am come to ask you whether you will give me

*à gouter.* Wherefore did not you come yesterday with your comrades? Don't you love me any longer?—The good man cast down his eyes, with an embarrassed air. His wife, less intimidated, answered: my master told me he could not have the honour of seeing our lady; that pleasure was denied him, because he did not wish to break her heart with a recital of his troubles; and he assures me, that she knows nothing of them.—It is because I know nothing of them, that he must make haste to inform me. Come, Bastien, you and I are old friends, come, child, come and sit by me, and speak out.

The poor fellow, after some hesitation, at last said: I have renewed my lease, and your steward has advanced my rent.—Advanced your rent! of how much?—One hundred pistoles.—Bastien, speak the truth, how much did you clear annually?—Two thousand francs.—So, then, now you have only one hundred pistoles profit?—No more.—If I am not mistaken, you have a family of five children?—Since we saw you, madam, it has pleased God to favour us with one more.—A high favour, indeed, for a poor wretch who can only earn

one thousand francs. She then turned towards me: The father, mother, and six children! to feed and clothe all of them, no more than one hundred paltry pistoles? I know, that by means of pinching a little, that trifle, in this part of the country, may be made to suffice; but never to treat a friend, never to have a bit of a relish, not to be allowed to spend a single sous but for indispensable articles; and after many years' labour and parsimony to have nothing left to portion the daughters, and to enable the sons to commence business; no, my good folks, no, it shall not be. Brumont, I beg you will tell la Fleur to go immediately and inform the steward that I am waiting for him here.

When I returned, I heard the Countess saying: Keep up your spirits, Bastien, and bring me some cream, for Mademoiselle de Brumont is a great amateur, and so am I.

He brought us two large salad-dishes full. I believe that the Countess would have had an indigestion, if her fun had not interrupted her swallowing. She could not resist the temptation, at every second or third spoonful, of daubing the face of her companion with the

nice liquid, who returned the compliment. This childish play amused us, we laughed like two madcaps, and were still at it when the steward arrived.

The Countess immediately resumed her gravity. Sir, said she, I would wish to know wherefore, without consulting me, you have advanced the rent of this good man?—Madam, I know the intentions of Monsieur le Comte.—I understand you, but you have forgot, that by using such means to flatter him, you might be sure of displeasing me in the highest degree. Hark, I do not intend to argue with M. de Lignolle upon the subject; you have committed the fault, it rests with you to repair it. If, before twelve o'clock to-morrow, you do not bring me a new lease, whereby the rent is continued on the former footing, you shall not sleep in the castle.—Madam!——No reply: begone.

The husband, wife, and eldest daughter, threw themselves at the knees of the Countess, and bathed her hands with their tears. Judge of my emotion, when I saw Madame de Lignolle shedding also delicious tears over the hands that squeezed hers. In the first transport of my enthusiasm, I flew into her arms, pressed



her to my bosom, gave her several kisses, and exclaimed: Adorable child! how dearly I shall love you! My good friends, said she, this is carrying matters too far: rise, rise up, I intreat you. If gratitude is a debt, Brumont has just been discharging yours. The riches of the whole globe could not pay for the pleasure I enjoy.

They arose; we left them; and the remainder of the cream was forgotten.

Although the too rapid transition from a very interesting scene to a very ludicrous one, should occasion you great surprise, and even make you angry for a moment, I cannot refrain from relating the comical incident which occurred on the night following.

The Countess knew that M. de Lignolle had taken for himself the apartment adjacent to ours; but the light-headed fair lady had not observed that only a thin partition separated her bed from that in which her husband still laid awake. By the questions he addressed to his wife, I leave you to guess at the cause of the noise he had heard: Are you incommoded, madame?—Who speaks to me?—I—What do you ask of me?—Whether you are incom-

moded?—Incommoded! do you say? Not in the least.—I heard you complaining, just now.—I did not complain, sir, I assure you; but, perhaps you yourself were dreaming; at any rate, I am wrong to be alarmed; if you wanted anything, your women are not far off.—And Mademoiselle de Brumont is here, close to me, sir.—Oh! what! does Mademoiselle de Brumont understand attending a woman who—— Better than all the women in the world put together.—Have you had occasion to try her, madam?—Several times, sir.—Already!—Yes; and I can vouch, that my women and yourself, sir, would have let me die, for want of being capacitated to give me that attendance which she has so skilfully lavished upon me.—That being the case, I may sleep in full quiet.—Sleep! sleep!—I wish you a good night, madam.—I return you thanks; it has had a tolerable good beginning.—Good night! Mademoiselle de Brumont.—Trust to me for that, sir.

This, however, was a warning for the lively Countess not to sigh so loud, if she happened to sigh again; and, especially, not to call me by any other than my maiden name, whether she

was pleased to receive some further assistance, or that she imagined she had only thanks to return me.

It was broad day-light when we awoke. Madame de Lignolle proposed taking a ride in the carriage, and going to join her husband, who, from an early hour, was gone out to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. We started. At about half a league from the castle, we got out of the coach, as the Countess wished to walk up a steep hillock. We were near reaching its summit, and Madame de Lignolle's servants at a pretty good distance behind, when we were surprised at seeing a man on horseback, who had come full gallop, stop as soon as he had reached us, and view us with a scrutinising eye. What does the fellow want? asked the Countess.—I am bearer of a letter to Mademoiselle de Brumont.—Give it to me.—I have been ordered to deliver it into Mademoiselle de Brumont's own hands.—I am the person.—No, it is not you: it is he, added he, pointing to me.—How, he! —Yes, he! He then threw the note at me, and set off as quick as he had come.

I opened, and read it. What is the matter? Faublas, exclaimed she: you turn pale!—Noth-

ing: nothing at all, my dearest.—Let me see that billet.—I cannot.—No? Before I could be aware of her intention, she snatched the cursed letter out of my hands, and pocketed it.

We returned to the castle; but notwithstanding my most earnest entreaties, she would not give up the letter. The Countess bolted herself and me in her apartment; and having on a sudden entered a dressing closet,\* she locked the door, and nothing preventing her any longer, she perused the fatal epistle. It was a challenge conveyed in the following words:

“ You were for a long time Mademoiselle du Portail; you are now Mademoiselle de Brumont; I have always read in your countenance, that for your whole life-time you would make it your business to impose upon married men, and to seduce their wives. I have it in my power, by divulging your secret, to have a second person interested in my cause; but then you would think that I am afraid. If you are not in reality become a female, you will, three

\* Remember this dressing closet; we shall return to it some day, and more than once.

days hence, on the 10th of the present month of March, repair to the forest of Compiègne, in the centre of the second cross-road, on the left-hand side. I shall be there from five to seven in the evening, unaccompanied either by friends or servants: I shall take no other weapon than my sword.

(Signed.) “LE MARQUIS DE B——.”

Madame de Lignolle had not disappeared for above two minutes before she returned and flew into my arms. You must go, my dear, said she; I am not a woman who would advise you to anything contrary to strict honour. We will have our dinner, and then set off; shall we not?—Yes, my dear.—On the 10th! This is the 9th; you have nearly forty leagues to travel over; you have not a moment to lose? Tell me?—Yes, my dear.—Well, we shall reach Paris in the evening. You will be at Compiègne at about five, and before dark you will have killed the Marquis. What say you?—Yes, my dear.—But do not miss your aim; kill him; it is a matter of material importance; kill him, he is acquainted with our secret. You conceive how dangerously we are situated?

You conceive?—Yes, my dear.—It is a cruel thing, however, to take away a man's life—to have to reproach one's self with the deed! No, Faublas, no; do not kill him; only wound him; and then exact his word of honour that he will not tell about us. Do you hear me?—Yes, my dear.—And you will return immediately to apprise me that the affair has been completely settled. I shall be waiting for you in Paris; you will return immediately, will you?—Yes, my dear.—Had not I better go with you? I see no impossibility; what do you think of it?—Yes, my dear.—But he always says yes! he answers without hearing me?

I heard very well, but could not comprehend her. Alarmed at this misfortune that threatened me, I reflected with deep despair that a duel would be the occasion, a second time, of my leaving my country,—to part from my friends, the Marchioness, my sister, my father——alas! from my Sophia!——and——shall I speak it?——to forsake the little Madame de Lignolle, whom I found daily more amiable and more interesting.

Faublas, continued she, tell me what makes you so uneasy? Is it because you must leave me

for a few days that you are made miserable? I am as much grieved as you are, my dear, but your absence will not last long. I shall see you again after to-morrow morning, shall I not? Speak to me.—Yes, my dear.—You pronounce that “yes” in the same tone as before, sir! and do not listen to me! Faublas! you do not listen to your Eleanor?—Yes, my dear.—Great God! how dejected he looks! What can——alas! but indeed if a misfortune should happen!——if, on the reverse, it was the Marquis de B—who——but no, it could not be so; my lover is the most courageous and expert of all men! Faublas! you will kill him! I tell you so! you will kill him!—— answer me.—Yes, my dear.—Again that “yes!” which puts me out of patience, that exasperates me, sir.—Have done, my Eleanor, you hurt me.—Answer; speak to me, then; tell me, my beloved, what causes your inquietude?—My inquietude! Can you ask such a question? Eleanor, a duel!—He is right——great God! to leave France!——do not leave it, my friend; come with me, you will be much better at my home than in a foreign country. If he was going to be arrested; to be confined; if we were

to be separated forever! Ah, Faublas! I beg of you, do not suffer yourself to be arrested, to be taken to prison again. Do not wait till you are taken. Hasten back to Paris; come to your friend's; and, if they should presume to follow you to my house, if they should be so daring, leave it to me; they will have me to deal with, and you also, Faublas. I shall protect you; you will protect me; we shall be two against them!

Madame de Lignolle, in her extreme agitation, would give me a thousand similar advices, which it was no easy matter for me to abide by. A visit, at last, was announced.—I am not at home, cried she.—Madame, replied the servant, it is the rector of our parish.—The rector! do not send him away; let him come upstairs.

She ran to meet him at the door. You are come just in time, worthy sir; I was going to send for you. I shall not ask you what you have done with the money my aunt left you the last time she was in the country: I am well aware of your prudence keeping pace with your integrity. I have only been here a couple of days, and have noticed the inhabitants looked equally comfortable and thankful; my heart



felt content. I shall not, however, conceal from you two causes of deep affliction; the Marchioness, you know, has always objected to any of her tenants being reduced to a state of servitude. I understand, nevertheless, that to be the case of poor Antonio. I have heard that he was a man of good character, undeserving of the misfortunes which have compelled him to give up his little farm, and to go out to procure work from his neighbours.—All that is very true, madam.—Well, suppose we make him a present of a few acres of land? I have also observed that old Duval's cottage was falling to decay. The poor veteran, perhaps, cannot afford to have it repaired; it has been the habitation of his forefathers; he has lived happy there; I wish he may there continue so for the remainder of his days; let us spend a few louis-d'ors to attain that purpose.—If I have not been misinformed, the road that leads to the next town wants the pavement, already begun, to be completed. Will twelve hundred francs be sufficient to have the work done?—I believe so, madam.—Well, let it be finished this year.

She took up a pen, wrote a few lines, and re-

turned to the respectable ecclesiastic.—Here, doctor, is a draft of four thousand francs upon my steward. You will have the goodness to take out of that sum what will be wanted for the fore-mentioned expenses; the remainder you will distribute according to circumstances among the most necessitous. I know not how to apologise for giving you so much trouble; I know that my children are yours; it would procure me infinite pleasure to share with you the task of assisting them, but indispensable business summons me to Paris.—Nothing disastrous, I hope, madam; you have been weeping. Oh! my God! be just; load this generous woman with prosperity only; the overthrow of her fortune would replunge a hundred families into a state of indigence! Oh, my God! for whom would you reserve riches, if you were to impoverish such as make the best use of them? Who, then, in this world could expect to be happy, if so many virtues were not to be rewarded with felicity?

M. de Lignolle returned from his shooting excursion a few hours after the Rector had left us. He had commenced a long history of his good shots, when his lady informed him that

we were going to have our dinner, and then to set off. The Count was surprised, yet pleased at the intelligence; althought he had intended returning to Paris only on the morrow, he had no objection, he said, to start one day sooner, that he might have the pleasure of our company. The Countess, who had preferred travelling with me alone, tried to persuade her husband not to be so positive; but unfortunately he had already reckoned that some expense might be saved by travelling together; and the Countess, probably, did not think it proper upon this occasion to exercise her authority.

In truth, a more useful opportunity of saying: I insist upon it, soon occurred. We had just done dinner, when the steward came to beg of the Count to sign Bastien's new lease. Monsieur, at first, refused. Madame grew angry. The dispute, though hot, was not of a long duration, and M. de Lignolle, though sighing aloud, finally did sign.

We at last took our departure. The deep reverie of Madame de Lignolle, clearly expressed that she was thinking of the reverse that threatened our amours, and yet, I believe, that my inquietude and sadness surpassed hers.

That fight, condemned by righteous laws, but commanded by tyrannical honour, that fatal duel which I was going to fight, tormented me most shockingly. I know not what presentiment, at once sweet and cruel, foreboded that the most interesting moment of my life was near at hand, that a few minutes longer, were to bring me into the most embarrassing situation, which could ever be experienced by a man of lively feelings, and who had to struggle with events, and his passions.

We had already travelled a couple of leagues, I discovered from a distance, the city of Nemours, and close to us, the steeple of Fromonville church. Madame de Lignolle on a sudden, was taken ill. The indisposition which she complained of caused me to shudder at once with inquietude and pleasure: she was sick. How much joy, how much grief for me! my Eleanor was with child! she undoubtedly was! But I was going to leave her! I was going to fight! in the course of three days, perhaps I should be forced to forsake at once, all! my mistress, child, country! my father! and my Sophia! Sophia, whom I no longer adored alone, but whom I adored still.

A thousand divers thoughts, thus collectively harassed my mind; a thousand opposite feelings thus oppressed my soul: yet they were only a prelude to the dreadful agitations which my Eleanor was going to share with me.

Her husband was foremost in advising, and I myself pressed her to leave her berlin for a moment, and to take a little exercise. She knew the country, and said that she felt strong enough, and wished to walk as far as the bridge of Montcour, where she ordered her coachman to proceed, and wait for us. She would not suffer her women, who followed in an open carriage behind, to get out and accompany her. We left the high road, went through Fromonville, as far as the sluice. The Countess had just refused taking M. de Lignolle's arm, but leaned upon mine. We walked slowly over the green turf, which in that part covers the borders of the canal.\* My Eleanor, still indisposed, would every now and then bend down

\* The canal of Briare, which begins at the town of that name, and running across twenty-two leagues of the country, ends at Saint Mametz. The bridge of Montcour is thrown over the canal, at six leagues from its mouth. The village of Fromonville, is seen at a quarter of a league's distance.

her head, which rested upon my shoulder, she pretty frequently would also send forth a tender sigh, and a gentle complaint. Her languishing, yet satisfied look, while informing me that she knew the cause of, and cherished her illness, seemed to solicit my love, rather than my compassion. And, I must confess it, less alarmed for the moment at the dangers of her situation, than delighted at the happiness of being a father, I viewed, with more gratification than terror, the alteration of that sweet face, which an interesting paleness rendered prettier still. Thus thinking of each other only, we could see nothing of the delightful landscape, which M. de Lignolle admired so much.

On a sudden a doleful cry, proceeding from a private house which I had not seen at first, struck my ears, and penetrated to the bottom of my heart. Great God! what a voice! I rushed on suddenly. Through some iron bars which stopped my course, I perceived, at the further extremity of a large garden, under a bower, a young person in a swoon, whom two women carried into a distant building, the door of which was immediately closed. I could not distinguish the features of the unhappy

creature, but I have seen her long dark hair reaching the ground; I have seen that elegant shape which can only be hers! that dolorous scream also, I thought I knew it again. I fancied I heard that scream a second time, that lamentable groan which she could not help uttering when in the convent of the Fauxbourg Saint Germain, cruel satellites prevented me from expiring in her arms. While laying fast hold of the gate, which I shook, as if I wished to pull it down, I ceased not crying out: She has fainted away, I could scarcely hear Madam de Lignolle, who begged of me to mind that she was fainting also.

A country girl happened to pass by, who seeing the uneasiness I was in, said to me: 'tis because she is ill.—Who?—that young miss.—What is her name?—I would tell you, miss, but I don't know.—Who are those women?—I leave you to guess; only think, they don't speak as we do.—How so?—Why? I can't tell, how could I, since the rector of our parish, who knows as much Latin as his prayer-book will hold, don't understand it more than my pocket; they speak such a brogue, that old Nick himself could not make head or tail of it.—Are

there any men in the house?—Every now and then I can see one, who looks to be the father of all the rest.—Is he old?—Not so very old, but of a mature age.—Does he speak French?—He! oh! he is much worse. He does not speak at all; he is a bear, begging your pardon, and when I go near his den, he looks as if he were going to swallow me up. There is a servant also, who is no youngster neither, but will chatter Iroqueze like the rest.—How long have those strange people lived in these parts?—Why somewhat about three or four——

Madame de Lignolle, beyond herself, did not allow her time to end her sentence: Hold your tongue, you gossip, and go about your business; now you, mademoiselle, do you intend to stop here all day, till such time as we are lost?

The Count, who most fortunately did not comprehend the true meaning of those equivocal words, “till such time as we are lost,” said, in vain, to make her easy, that it was impossible we should be lost, though in a dark night, in a common high road. He repeated it to no purpose; she was alarmed, she uttered lamentations, she exclaimed: Don’t you hear me, my dear? Could you forsake me in my present sit-



uation? Must I be reduced to implore the commiseration of strangers as they pass by me?

I looked at Madame de Lignolle, and shuddered, I no longer beheld that interesting countenance, whereupon lively pleasure checked the signs of slight pain; her features were convulsed. Burning anger blazed in her eyes; pale terror discoloured her cheeks, she could hardly stand on her trembling legs, she shuddered through every limb.

What she had been saying to me, and the situation in which I saw her, brought me back to my proper senses. I was struck immediately with the numberless dangers that threatened us, on the formidable spot where I obstinately would stop. If my ears have not deceived me, if the emotion of my heart does not impose upon me, it was my Sophia whom I have heard to groan, it is her whom I have seen ready to breathe her last; she undoubtedly has uttered that scream of despair only when under a perfidious disguise, she knew her unfaithful husband again. Since my wife is in that house, du Portail is there with her; the lover of Madame de Lignolle will not be able to escape being recognised by the man

who has so often seen the metamorphoses of Madame de B—'s lover; and my inflexible father-in-law, if he perceives me, will look out for another retreat to-morrow, and carry away from me my adored wife—adored although betrayed! M. de Lignolle, too, who is already asking me wherefore I am concerned about those women—who speaks of going to enquire who those foreigners are, may at the first word of an explanation, equally easy and fatal, discover the twofold secret of my sex and of my name.

The multiplicity of those dreadful considerations terrified me; and in my sudden fright, I was as prompt to retire from the gate, as I had been eager a moment before to break it open.

Within my left arm I pressed the right arm of the Countess, and with my right hand seized the left of her inquisitive husband; then, without weighing in my mind whether the one was willing or the other had strength to follow me, I dragged them both to upwards of two hundred yards from the dangerous house. There I stopped; doubtful how to act, I turned round, and my sad looks were cast towards the place

which I had just run away from. Alas! a forest of poplar trees, friendly, perhaps, concealed from me the walls wherein I left, a prey to black despair, the dearest object I had in the world! My heart then grew contracted, I had no further occasion to conceal my tears, I could weep no longer.

Meanwhile the Countess, under a pretence that quick walking did her good, pressed me to help her to proceed. I was then obliged, at the same time, to support my unhappy friend, ready to fall at every step, to dissemble my extreme anxiety, and to answer, in a satisfactory manner, M. de Lignolle, who kept asking me questions as he hopped after us.

We reached Montcour. The overtired Countess stepped into her carriage, and only opened her mouth to bid her coachman to drive as quick as he possibly could to Fontainebleau, where she intended to take post horses. M. de Lignolle, quite out of breath, kept silent for awhile, so that I was left at liberty at last to probe the wounds in my heart, and to indulge my poignant reflections.

Faublas, whither is that rapid vehicle carrying you? Cruel man! whither are you going so

fast? Whom have you left behind? Separated four months since from him she idolised, she called on him every day with tears in her eyes. However, the tortures of absence might have been soothed by the consoling idea, that a faithful husband groaned likewise. How much more miserable, now she is obliged to think the ungrateful man forsakes and runs away from her. This morning, no doubt, she cherished the author of her woes; this evening she must hate him. Oh! Sophia! Sophia! when you will read within my heart, you will only pity me, forgive me, and adore me again. Your rival, it is true, now sits by the side of me; but behold the grief which my pledged love to you, the love I feel for you, occasions her: what a sorrowful situation she is in! after shedding floods of tears, for fear of breaking out in bitter reproaches, she would not speak a single word to me, not even to complain of her sufferings. Her inflamed eyelids are weighed down; a cruel drowsiness overcomes her, the stillness of death is but too apparent? My dear Eleanor, how I pity you!—how I love you!

What have I been saying? Oh, Sophia, cease to be alarmed. When the moment is come, you

will see whether I hesitate between my wife and my mistress. Eleanor, you will not consider it a crime if I leave you to go to her. My Sophia's accomplishments are not inferior to yours, and I am bound to her. Dread not, however, Eleanor, your friend entirely forsaking you. Could your lover be such a monster as to forget his having made you a mother? No, my dear, I will come secretly at times to bewail your miseries. We shall no longer spend whole days together under the same roof, but—What projects! Oh! who will pity me? Who will settle my irresolution? Oh! who will prevent my fatal sensibility making perpetually wretched two objects nearly adorable to the same degree. But where am I wandering again? I shall not be allowed to divide myself between them, I shall lose them both.

I shall only pass through Paris without stopping. Perhaps I shall never see Fromonville again. Honour summons me to Compiègne, to Compiègne, whither I am going to meet—no, not death—I could face undaunted the Count and Marquis, united against me, for a similar cause,—no, not death, but exile, which in the present moment is to me far more dreadful.

Execrable power of opinion! it is with a view of immolating an enemy, justly irritated, that I quit at the same time two beloved women; it is inflexible honour which commands the odious sacrifice! A barbarous prejudice compels me, although I would have resisted any other inducement, or the most excruciating pain.

Mademoiselle, cried out M. de Lignolle, let us see, whether you can guess this? I answered in a low tone of voice: The deuce take the whole race of charades! and aloud: Your proposal is very unseasonable, for I am as stupid as an owl. —Quite womanlike, I know you by that; they are as cowardly as hares: at the least scratch they think that death is staring them in the face. See, now, the Countess suffers more from her apprehensions than from illness; but in truth it is not an illness, but a mere temporary indisposition, the common effect of a country jaunt, the spring; and who knows? of a rather violent exercise. To be sure, mademoiselle, you go on with her at such a rate! take my word for it, mind what I say to you, it will hurt her. Perhaps, however, it is only an excessive good health, an apoplexy of humours, of

propitious, benign humours—it is a clear case, and by no means alarming. Yet she grieves, and why does she? Because her soul is affected, because the souls of females are liable to be so, whether they be married or single; and as you love the Countess, at least I think so, and without boasting I am a tolerably good connoisseur; as you love her, I say, you grieve at her grief, so as to grow stupid, according to your own saying; though I imagine you don't mean to be thought so. At any rate, however, you are unable to guess my charade, because your soul is likewise affected, and thus it will take place, that the greatest operations of the mind depend upon the minutest affections of the soul. That may be, sir, but I beg you will leave me to indulge my reveries.

I repeated my supplications to this effect several times, prior to our reaching Paris, where we arrived at three o'clock in the morning. The Countess, scarcely allowing her husband to enter her apartment, hastened to dismiss her women, and, when left alone with me, flew into my arms. Faublas, speak the truth; is not it her that you have found again? It is, my dear.—How unhappy I am! answer me:

Could it be possible for you to intend forsaking me?—Forsaking you, my Eleanor! How could I? who could be loved by you and not adore you, not burn with a desire of seeing you again?—That is exactly what I will say to myself when I think of you, and I am continually thinking of you. So, then, my dear friend, you expect to return from Compiegne here, without stopping anywhere, without going anywhere else?—Without going anywhere else? But my wife?—Well! your wife?—My wife, who so long since——He wishes to go and join her!—My wife——How happy she is to be his wife! to have a lawful right because she has said “yes” or “I will” in a church, for that is the only difference.—You have seduced and deceived me, as you have her, yet I am satisfied, and idolise you the same as she does. And do you imagine my being sick is a matter of no consequence? *C’est un enfant que vous m’avez fait.* Monsieur, I do not complain; I don’t say that I am sorry for it, quite the reverse.—I am well aware that my character will be impaired, that perhaps it will be the ruin of me. But let them divest me of my rank and property; I agree to it with all my heart,



provided they allow me to retain my liberty and my lover. Yes, all things duly weighed, I am delighted at being made a mother; in the first place, it is an advantage I shall have over your Sophia, and, next, you must love me better, for I love you the more for it. And yet, ungrateful man, you dare to think of leaving me in my present situation!—My dear friend, only think that I am ignorant myself of what is to become of me; this evening, in all probability, instead of returning to Paris, I shall be obliged to leave France.—In vain do you endeavour to persuade me; it is at Fromonville that you are in expectation of finding an asylum! I declare, sir, that if you go there you must drag me after you. I declare that I will accompany you to Compiègne, that I will follow you everywhere, that I will stick to you as if I was your shadow. Perfidious man, you will have, I swear, no other means of getting rid of me, but to immolate me by the side of your antagonist.—I beg of you, be pacified; listen to me.—I will listen to nothing. You want to leave me; I shall keep to you in spite of yourself. I shall even use violence. We are going to Compiègne, that is a settled busi-

ness; and as for Fromonville, if I cannot prevent you from returning there, I hope you will not attempt preventing my following you thither. However, you are not there yet; a good thrust may not allow you to go there in such a hurry.—My stars! what have I been saying? No, Faublas, I rather wish you should not be killed.—Defend yourself well: we shall see afterwards who, of Sophia or of me, shall carry the day; do not suffer yourself to be wounded, as in your first duel; rather kill him; pray do kill him. I shall be there, my dear, I shall help you with my advice, and encourage you by my cries; you will fight before me, under my eyes, before the mother of your child; you will be invincible. Why do not you answer? speak to me.—What would you have me answer, when you listen only to a blind rage, and plan the most irrational projects? Eleanor! my dear Eleanor! is it possible you should go to Compiègne, and not expose yourself?—Quite possible, for it shall be so.—My dearest, act rationally. Admitting that you were able to bear the fatigue of that second journey, and that, by an inconceivable good fortune, nobody should recognise Madame de

Lignolle travelling post with the Chevalier de Faublas; I ask it of yourself, can I suffer you to witness a bloody scene at a time especially when your critical situation demands particular attention?—Particular attention, no doubt—That is the reason why it is incumbent upon me to follow you to Compiègne, and why you must not go to Fromonville. What will become of me when I am informed that you are gone to meet your antagonist, and perhaps my female enemy? Tormented by the most dreadful inquietude at every moment in the day, I shall behold my lover either unfaithful or dying. Alas! in whatever manner my lover is taken from me, if I lose him what is life to me? Faublas, I beseech you, pity me, pity your child, pity yourself; dread my rage, do not drive me to despair—Faublas, I conjure you, promise me that you will not see Sophia to-morrow; promise that I shall see the Marquis with you this evening.

She was on her knees before me; she kissed and bedewed mine with tears. The most unfeeling of mortals could not have resisted her. I promised all she asked for.

Notwithstanding we were to set off before

dawn, yet we could not determine to sit up all night. Madame de Lignolle wanted consolation no less than repose. We went to bed; to the painful agitations of a too long day, succeeded the sweet agitations of too short a night: and the Countess, exhausted with fatigue, finally went to sleep. That was what her unfortunate lover had been waiting for: compassion had induced him to utter a falsehood, and imperious necessity forced him to break his promises.

By the feeble light of the rising sun, I removed, cautiously, the sheet which enveloped me; by gradual motions, I reached the edge of the bed; my feet already touched, or rather skimmed the ground; the bed-clothes were replaced gently; and, on that couch where love lately heaved happy sighs, and enjoyed still repose, a forsaken lover was left to groan bitterly.

I was very slow at dressing myself, for fear of making a noise. However, I had got quite ready, and was going. I was seized, on a sudden, with a deadly shivering! I entered Mademoiselle de Brumont's room, that room which led to the private staircase. I entered it, and

could feel my heart to fail me. Irresolute, I stopped; I then, alternately, turned round, withdrew, and advanced again—attempted to fly away, and drew near again. Great God; is it a mistake? Has she not spoken? Has she not mentioned my name? Let me listen. Yes, this time, I have heard her very plain: it is Faublas, it is her friend whom she calls in plaintive, dolorous accents. Amiable, and dear creature! a dream informs her of my flight; she is agitated by a dreadful dream—alas! too true. I felt a violent agitation myself, stooped towards her, my mouth murmured an adieu, my lips nearly pressed hers, I dropped a tear upon her uncovered breast—alas! I had reached the private staircase.

I had the misfortune to meet M. de Lignolle in the yard, just going to step into his carriage. —Ah! ah! so early?—Yes, sir, I am going out. —What! without the Countess?—She is tired, she is fast asleep, she knows that I have some business that will keep me out all day.—Are you going by yourself? and on foot!—I shall call a coach.—No, mademoiselle, I shall take you wherever you want to go.—But, sir, it will take you out of your way; you are in a hurry.—

Never mind.—Permit me——I shall suffer no such thing.

While I stand contending with M. de Lignolle, to evade his troublesome politeness, the Countess may awake, and make a terrible bustle; I yielded consent, in consequence of that reflection; I got into the cursed carriage; M. de Lignolle did the same, and desired me to tell the coachman where I wished to be carried. I thought, at first, of saying my sister's convent; but, upon second thoughts, directed him to take me to the house of Madame de Fonrose.

When arrived at the Baroness's door, I got out of the carriage; and, as I was going to enter the hotel, I saw M. de Belcour, coming out, incog.

He knew me again, and cried out: I have found you, at last! It must be chance, then.—Trembling, I interrupted him: Father that gentleman whom you see in his carriage, I beg leave to introduce to you; he is the Comte de Lignolle, the husband of that young lady, at whose house——

The Count, who had heard us, hastened out of the carriage, threw his arms round my father's neck, and congratulated him, upon hav-

ing a daughter who guessed every charade that was presented to her. He next added, we return her to you for four-and-twenty hours, but hope that to-morrow you will do us the pleasure of bringing her back yourself.

M. de Belcour wished to be excused, but M. de Lignolle persevered: Mademoiselle de Brumont must return, for my wife is ill.—I am sorry for it, replied the Baron, out of patience; but——But, continued the other, you need not be alarmed. It is only a temporary indisposition; she has been sick—that proceeded, I believe, from her having taken, these last few days, too much exercise with your daughter, who you know, is active, and of a strong constitution. The Countess is still in her teens, mind. However, as I told you before, it is nothing. Nevertheless, it might become serious, if Mademoiselle de Brumont did not return; because, my wife, who is very fond of her, would grieve; her soul would be affected, sir, and when a woman's soul is affected, good bye! there is nobody at home!—I must repeat, sir, that I cannot promise.—I will not leave you till you have given me your word.—I beg——Ah! I beseech you, M. de Brumont.

The Baron, yielding to his natural impetuosity, exclaimed: let me alone, sir. Then casting at me an angry look, said: is it not shocking that I should be continually exposed in this manner?—I shuddered, and threw myself into his arms. Oh! father! remember la porte Maillot.

These few words rendered him more composed, and he immediately begged a thousand pardons, and returned as many thanks to M. de Lignolle.

This latter gentleman, meanwhile, stood amazed at the anger which the supposed M. de Brumont had so given vent to. In order to remove all his suspicions on the subject, I thought it advisable to whisper to him, in a mysterious tone, the following insidious confidence; Madame de Fonrose has informed you, that certain family business compelled my father to live incog. in this country, and yet you wish him to go and see you! and call him aloud by his name!—Ah! how sorry I am that I have been so forgetful, said the Count to the Baron;—and I, for having been so rude, replied the latter.—I beg you will not mention it, I have been to blame; but wherefore refuse your



daughter returning to my wife? Well, since you can't bring her yourself, promise at least to send her back.—I promise, resumed M. de Belcour, to exert my endeavours so that you may have no occasion to repent for your extreme politeness.—The business is now settled. I am satisfied. But you have no carriage; shall I see you home?—I then answered him: We thank you. But I want to speak to the Baroness; I hope my father will step up with me; it is something particular I have to say to her.

He drove off. When his carriage was at a distance, we got into a hackney coach, which, whilst carrying us from the further end of the fauxbourg Saint Germain to la place Vendôme, afforded me full time to indulge my reveries. Solely engaged in thinking of the despair of my wife, forsaken on the preceding day; of the approaching miseries of my mistress, whom I had been unfaithful to that very morning, I seemed to be attentively listening to the salutary representations of M. de Belcour. Vain sounds struck my ears; I was awakened from my lethargy only by the following words of the long reprimand; the miseries of Sophia, whom

you forgot.—No, I do not forget her, no. Her miseries are great, no doubt, but they will be of no long duration—to-morrow, yes, to-morrow. And you, father, this very day. Ah! I must beg your pardon, I am beyond myself. You are getting out here, father you are going to see Adelaide?—I am, Sir.—I am not going to shew myself in the parlour in my present costume. I shall go home and change my dress, and then—farewell, father.—Oh! you, whom I love as much as she does! adieu—How so, my friend! are you not coming to join me?—To join you! Ah! yes, to join you!—father, embrace me then, forgive me, for all the chagrin I occasion you.—With all my heart, but pray—Indeed I would wish to behave better; but I cannot resist.—You will have the goodness to kiss my sister for me, won't you?—You will discharge your errand presently yourself.—Yes, father—I shall see you again to-morrow.—What does he mean? Are you deranged?—True indeed, I speak at random. Farewell, I am sorry to leave you, adieu! you will hear from me in an hour.

I reached home. Jasmin was standing sentry at the door; the fellow laughed at seeing me in

female attire; and apprised me that Madame de Montdesir had already sent twice that morning to enquire whether I was returned from the country, and to recommend I should be desired, immediately upon my arrival, to go to her house. Very well! this agrees with my plan. Quick, Jasmin, dress my hair.—Like a man's, mademoiselle?—Yes.

The business was soon done.

Jasmin! a pen, ink, and paper. Quick. Whilst I am writing, make haste to get everything ready for me to dress from head to foot.—In man's clothes, mademoiselle?—To be sure. Next you will get my horse, and your own ready also.—And am I to go with you sir?—Yes.—So much the better, I shall have some fun. We certainly are about some frolic.—Jasmin, you must reach me my sword.—Ah? so much the worse, for if we are going to fight we shall kill somebody. The poor little Marquis, methinks I see him, down he comes. That was his own fault, though, for we did everything to spare him; you carried it too far! since that one is not dead, his soul must have been serewed into his body.—Jasmin, make haste; we hav'nt a moment to lose; above

all things don't go and blabber.—I had rather be hanged, sir, than divulge your secret.

I was writing to my father, and giving him all the information I possibly could respecting Sophia's place of retirement, and my letter was concluded in the following manner.

“Go, father, I beseech you, set off immediately for Fromonville! Let not du Portail escape you a second time; whatever his motives may be, see my father-in-law, speak to him, soothe him, that he may restore to us his admirable daughter; bring my dear Adelaide back with you, pray do bring her back. The two friends will be so glad to meet again! Let the presence of Adelaide be to Sophia the forerunner of Faublas's return, let the tender caresses of the sister prepare her for the transports of the brother, of that brother who adores her, by whom she is idolised. The extreme tender feelings of Sophia require to be nicely managed. Spare no pains, I beg of you, to inform her of our re-union, without endangering her health. She now is plunged into deep despair; her joy would kill her. I confide into your hands, father, my dearest interest; I

recommend her to your care, the most respectable, the most beautiful, the most amiable creature in the world, I recommend to you my beloved.

“ Oh! that I could myself now fly to Fromonville! Alas! I am going elsewhere. Need I tell you that an indispensable affair imposes the obligation upon me. Yet be not alarmed. Tomorrow, before twelve I shall be near my father, near my wife; I swear by Sophia and by you.”

I dressed myself, and sealed my letter, which a trusty man was commissioned to take to Adelaide's convent, and to deliver into M. de Belcour's own hands. I ordered Jasmin to go and wait for me at la porte Saint Martin, and ran to Madame de Montdesir's.

I found there, not Madame de B—, but Vicomte de Florville. Here he is at last, said he. I apologised for having kept him waiting, and thanked the Marchioness, who had sent for me just at the time when I was anxious to know how I could procure the happiness of a few minutes' conversation with her. I added, that I had brought from the country a grand

piece of news.—What is it?—I have seen Sophia.—She turned pale, and cried out: That is impossible!

I informed her, in a few words, of the retreat which du Portail had selected, and how, by mere chance, I had the good fortune to find it out. The Marchioness looked uneasy while listening to me; I entreated her to send immediately to Fromonville some people to watch du Portail, and follow him everywhere; for I apprehended, lest my father-in-law still intended, and might find the means of avoiding M. de Belcour's pursuit.—How comes it, said she, in a faltering voice, that you do not go yourself?—I cannot, an affair of importance calls me to another part.—She resumed, with a more calm air, and in a tone of greater assurance: What! has Madame de Lignolle already acquired such an empire over you?—It is not Madame de Lignolle who tears me away from Sophia; an indispensable duty.—Speak it out; can't I know?—Believe me, my dear mamma, it breaks my heart to keep a secret from you.—This is giving me a broad hint, Chevalier, that I should be guilty of indiscretion if I were to ask any further questions. I conde-

scend to believe, that I have no reason to complain of so much reserve. I am going to issue the most pressing orders that du Portail should be watched from this evening, and that he may not stir an inch without my being informed of it directly; either I, or little Montdesir, in my absence, added she, with a deep sigh.—In your absence, mamma! Are you going to quit Paris?—Presently, my good friend——That is very unlucky for me! how sorry I am to lose you, especially at a time when your advice and assistance would have been so requisite! Where are you going?—To Versailles, first.—To Versailles in this dress! mamma, it appears to me to be the *frac Anglais* of the charming Vicomte, whose name I had borrowed, and which you embellished on the day we went to Saint Cloud together?—That may be, returned she, affecting not to be certain. Yes, I believe it is the same.—And from Versailles you intend proceeding to?—Chevalier, it is with regret I am forced to repeat your own words: Believe me, it breaks my heart to keep a secret from you.—But, will it be a long journey?—Perhaps, my good friend, perhaps, answered she, in broken accents, and that is the reason why, prior

to my undertaking it, I ardently wished to bid you adieu.—Adieu! mamma; my dear mamma, you make me quite uneasy, you look sad, pray entrust—She interrupted me on a sudden: Respect my secret, I did not attempt to force yours. I do not even pretend to guess at it. Go, Faublas, go and return content, if possible. I cannot be explicit, I cannot speak of the approaching event, nor mention the apprehensions that discompose me, the wishes I presume to harbour! But my friend, my dear friend, how cruel if we were never to see one another again.—Great gods! you sigh! your eyes are bedewed with tears!—Adieu, Faublas, adieu, my dear child. I grieve at leaving you; remember it, if some great misfortune was to happen. Do not forget, the Marchioness de B— lost you on account of an act of treachery, and that she became the victim of a base man, who called himself your friend. Do not forget, above all things, that she never ceased bearing you the most tender—friendship; the most tender, repeated she, squeezing my hand—

She gave me a kiss, and ran away from me.

I remained confounded at what I had just heard; and in the first moment of my surprise,



repeated some of the expressions that had escaped Madame de B—

Go, and return content; I cannot tell the wishes I presume to harbour; how cruel if we were never to see one another again. It is beyond a doubt. Madame de B— knows that I am going to fight, and who my adversary is—The wishes I presume to harbour!—Those wishes she could not express, without committing a crime. I, perhaps, am excusable, for endeavouring to find out her secret, her most secret thoughts.—How cruel if we were never to see one another again. You will see me again, Madame de B—, you will see me again, rest assured of it; you being the prize of the contest, the day will be mine.

Imprudent Marquis! how audacious to challenge Faublas to the field of honour! how rash your attack upon a life so powerfully defended! The destinies of three charming women are linked with mine.

Justine, who now came in, perhaps intended to give me some encouragement, in her way, but it was already so late, that I could not have listened to her, although I had been so inclined.

At the porte Saint Martin I found my man,

who accompanied me as far as Bourget; there I bade him take my horse back to Paris, and applied for post horses.

I reached the forest of Compiègne, and the appointed spot, before the clock struck five. For some minutes I had been walking up and down, when, on a sudden, two men came up, and clapped each of them a pistol to my breast. They next asked me whether I was a gentleman?—I hesitated not to answer in the affirmative. Since it is so, sir, have the goodness to cover your face with this mask, and to stand witness to a fight, which is going to take place between two persons of high rank. Give us your word of honour, don't speak a word, but remain motionless during the contest, and whatever may be the issue, never to reveal it.—I will not boast, sir, my being a man of very high rank; though, in truth, besides being possessed of a large fortune, I bear an ancient name. I myself have an appointment here to fight. Perhaps you have been led into an error, perhaps I am intended to be one of the performers in the unhappy scene, which you wish I should be a tranquil spectator of?—We shall soon know, sir, whether it is to be so, but till such

time as we have ascertained the fact, please to put on this mask, and to give your word of honour.

You may easily conceive that I did, and promised to do all they were willing to dictate.

For about an hour I had been in that situation, which began to cause me some inquietude, when I thought I heard a noise towards the extremity of a walk that joined the high road. The moment after, I saw a post-chaise, surrounded by several masked and armed men, enter from the same side the cross-road where I stood. It appeared to me, that this gang, which at first I imagined to be composed of assassins, had just secured the servant and postilion, and compelled the master to get out of the chaise. Dreading lest he should be massacred before my eyes, actuated by a rash zeal, I was going to fly to his assistance; the two men who watched over me only kept me back by saying: The critical moment is come, think of what you have promised.

In the meantime the unknown person, still surrounded, was advancing towards us most steadily, and with an air of great composure.

The nearer he approached, the more I thought I recollected the features of a young man whom I had not seen for a long time. When he had got to a short distance, one of my keepers went straight up to him, desired him to stop, and said: A man of honour complains of your having done him a mortal injury, and intends to claim immediate reparation; if he falls, he promises that no particulars of the fight shall ever be made known to anyone; in case he should survive his wounds, he engages to return to the same spot as soon as he is cured, to maintain the contest, which can only be completely settled by the death of one of the parties. Make a similar engagement, Monsieur le Comte; and swear upon your honour to fulfil it.—What! replied the young man, is Lord Barrington offended at my leaving England without having taken leave of his august spouse? It must be confessed that husbands all over the world are queer people! This outlandish husband especially appears to me to be a great oddity; did he wish me to entertain an everlasting blaze for his languishing lady? Besides, if he bore me malice, why did he not tell me so in his own country? Wherefore did he

not come to Brussels, where I stopped a long time, having heard that he was in search of me? Why, at the expiration of six weeks, comes he with this frightful apparatus, to attack me in my own country, when I am just returned to it? At any rate, I hope we are not going to fisty cuffs.

By his voice, his countenance, and his lively discourse, as well as by his sneers, I could no longer doubt of his being Rosambert. Then only I began to surmise the strange truth: Oh! Madame de B—, for you it was that my heart throbbed! however, I took great care not to exhibit by any motion, or to express by any words, my extreme surprise, and my profound terror: I was bound by oath.

Rosambert was now presented with a horse, which he was invited to mount; and with a pistol, which he was desired to load himself. The Count soon crossed the horse; and while loading his pistol, said to those who encircled him: Yes, you are right; this is the favorite mode of fighting among those sons of Albion. With the exception of the pistol, I stand highly obliged to the noble lord; he makes me a thousand years younger than I was. Indeed, gentlemen

of the Round Table, the heroical parade which we are now exhibiting, exactly resembles an adventure of king Arthur! In imitation of the champions of old, you stop travellers on the high road, to make them tilt with you. Rosambert then casting a look at me, continued: This genteel cavalier, who stands solus, without opening his mouth, or meddling with your bravados, who is he? A gentle damsel whom I must relieve; or some great princess in male attire? I should like it better, for my part. But where is the giant, the famous giant that I am to cut in halves? The stranger, who had hitherto been the spokesman, then said to Rosambert: Swear, monsieur le Comte, to stick to the terms agreed upon.—Foi, de gentilhomme! Gentlemen I do.

One of my keepers gave the signal, by firing a shot. We immediately perceived an individual approaching at full gallop from the other extremity of the avenue. Rosambert waited for him undaunted; but whether he relied too much upon his taking a good aim, or that he did not entirely retain the sang froid requisite upon those occasions, he fired at his antagonist from too great a distance, and missed him. The

other, on the contrary, with more skill and intrepidity, fired almost immediately, but yet fired last. The ball whistled close to Rosambert's ear, carried off one of his curls, and struck his hat so as to make it drop. The Count, catching hold of it, exclaimed: He is quite in earnest; this masked opponent aims at my brains.

His adversary's face, the same as mine, was concealed under a thin piece of paste-board; but I could not help shuddering when I saw the same *frac Anglais*, in which, on that same morning, the Marchioness had appeared before me at Justine's lodgings.

The Vicomte de Florville, for I could no longer entertain any doubts, had turned round, full gallop, to reach the extremity of the avenue. Rosambert, who did not lose sight of him, said: that is truly my lord's national frock; but, by St. George; I do not see his round belly. Gentlemen, added he, in a tone expressive of spite and audacity, I never could have presumed to offer such an offence to an Englishman, as to imagine he would fight by proxy. I shall try, however, although the best shot in the three kingdoms had been sent

against me, whether there is no possibility to prevent a foreigner, were he one of Old Nick's tribe, to have occasion to boast of being victorious over a Frenchman, without incurring some danger. Where art thou, my dear Faublas, who never missed a flying swallow? Oh, that I were possessed, on the present occasion, for the honour of France, and to punish a traitor, of thy quick sight, and steady hand.

The Count, having loaded a second time, a new signal was given. Rosambert, this time, did not remain motionless: he spurred his horse forward, and the two adversaries, meeting half way, fired at the distance of five or six paces. The Count's ball only went through the collar of the coat of his antagonist, who, more successful, fractured his right shoulder, and brought him to the ground.

The conqueror, immediately taking off his mask, produced before the eyes of the stupefied vanquished, the face of Madame de B—.

Look! base traitor! said the Marchioness, know me again, and blush! You die by the hand of a woman! You showed courage and dexterity only to insult her!

Rosambert appeared, for a moment, to be



*The Count's ball only went through the collar of the coat  
of his antagonist.*

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The Count's ball only went through the collar of the coat  
of his antagonist.

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overpowered by the pain he suffered, and the disgrace of his defeat. He cast a wondering look at the Marchioness; but, resuming his natural disposition, addressed her in broken accents, his voice being nearly extinct: What! my fair lady, is it you that I am so happy as to see again? How times are changed! Our last interview, to speak the truth, I found more entertaining; and so did you, my beauty, though you might pretend to deny it. Ungrateful creature! was it here—was it in this way that you were to disable a complaisant young man, who, in former days, went from Paris to Luxembourg, for the sole purpose of procuring you some pleasing occupation?—Rosambert, replied the Marchioness, in vain are you striving to dissemble your rage, and the pain you endure. Heaven is just; I am entitled to congratulate myself; I have reaped a double revenge; your punishment, which now commences is not near being at an end. Remember our terms; remember that my enemy is to keep my secret wherever he may go, and bring me back my victim on this very spot.

The Count, lifting up his head, with great difficulty, turned towards me: This young man,

said he, is certainly the Chevalier de Faublas —Faublas!—I took off my mask, and went up to him. First let us embrace, continued he. She has overpowered me, my friend; be not surprised at it; it is not the first time that she has brought me down. And while I was invoking your name, sir, here you stood, your wishes were not in my favour, but against me: I forgive you, however. She is such a lovely creature! Come and see me in Paris, if I do but reach it time enough just to get buried there.

The Marchioness then took me aside, and said to me: Chevalier, pardon my mysteriously concealing from you the peril to which I was going to be exposed, and the artifice I have used to oblige you to witness it. My lover, alas! had seen the offence offered: I deemed it proper my friend should be present at the reparation. Faublas, I knew well, still felt so concerned in my behalf, that he would have willingly espoused my quarrel, but he, perhaps, would not have esteemed me so far as to think me worthy of maintaining it myself. Yet, added she, with a mixture of joy and pride, I have just evinced, that half a year back, I did not take an engage-

ment above my power to fulfil, when reduced to the hard necessity of living merely to gratify my revengeful spirit, I took the oath of surprising you by the manner in which it was to be accomplished.

Now, Faublas, what appeared to you equivocal, or obscure, in my discourse of this morning, is clearly explained. You may conceive what apprehensions I was a prey to, when, with tears in my eyes, I asked my friend whether it would not be a cruel thing never to see one another again. You must be no stranger to the inquietude that tormented me, when Sophia's lover informed me that he had just found her again. Ah! believe me, I comprehended immediately that du Portail might have recognised you on the road to Montcour; I should feel extremely sorry if this trip to Compiègne had left your father-in-law time to carry away your wife once more. Faublas, if such a misfortune has happened, be not so unjust as to charge your friend with the sad accident. Consider, that when I had a challenge under the name of M. de B— delivered to you, nothing could induce me to guess, that on your return with Madame de Lignolle, you were to meet Sophia. Reflect,

moreover, that there was no further necessity this morning of sending you back to Fromonville, since it would have been impossible for you, though you had travelled ever so quick, to arrive there before the faithful emissaries which I immediately dispatched, with express orders to watch every motion of M. du Portail, if he still inhabited the same retreat; or to go in pursuit of him if he had left it. Now that there is no impediment to detain you, go and——

Madame de B— was interrupted by screams that seemed to issue from Rosambert's post-chaise, which had remained in the cross-road, towards, though at some distance from, the main road. We all ran, with the exception of the surgeon, who was busy in dressing the Count's wounds. As we drew near, we perceived behind the Count's vehicle, a gig, in which we saw a female struggling very hard; she was held by the same masked men who had secured Rosambert's postilion and servant. My stars! exclaimed she, it is all over then! They were not able to conquer, and have murdered him! Ah! said she, with a joyful exclamation, there he is! there he is! Then in



a mournful tone, Perfidious man! it is true, then, that you have been so cruel as to take the advantage of my being asleep!

The Marchioness asked me in a whisper, whether that was not the young Countess?—I answered yes, and rushed into the arms of my mistress.

Is it all over? resumed the Countess: I have heard several shots. Who are those people that have stopped me? You were to fight with swords! I am all in a tremble, seized with fright. Where is your antagonist? Is the day yours? He was not to bring anybody with him, wherefore all these people? these weapons? these masks? How glad I am to see you, my dear! how frightened I am! Barbarous Faublas! how angry I am with you, for having left me in so base a manner.

Thus did Madame de Lignolle by the disorder of her questions, announce the confusion of her ideas: that in her person may easily be described. You might have read in her looks, so lately mild, now gloomy and dazzling, successively and almost at a time, the sweet mistakes of hope, the deadly reveries of fear, the intoxication of happy love; the rage of be-

trayed love; you might have seen in her countenance, the wonderful mobility whereof alarmed me, all the impetuous passions militating against each other; each muscle seemed to be agitated by a convulsive movement, the expression of each sentiment passed as quick as a flash of lightning.

Would you believe it? continued she; I have slept, though you were no longer there! I slept till noon! but what sleep! great God! horrid dreams disturbed it! you ran away from me at every moment, and I then found myself surrounded by dreadful objects only; the Marquis, the Marchioness, your wife! your wife! I am your wife! am I not, my dear? Never forget it, sir! The Marquis, have you killed him?—No, my dear.—Come, said Madame de B—, whom this conversation most probably rendered uneasy, come, Florville! Cross your horse! be mounted! quick! you have no time to lose!—What do you mean, with your “no time to lose?” exclaimed the Countess, casting a terrible look at the Vicomte de Florville; is he losing time when he is with me? Who is that saucy youth?—A relation of M. de B—.—Hear me, my dear; I am afraid of all that

family. Oh, how much I have suffered since yesterday! What a torture to be continually fretting for myself! for him! unceasingly to be thinking of that rival who wishes to rob me of him! of that enemy who threatens his life! Have you wounded him?—No, my dear.—You have not even wounded him? Sir, only think, I had prescribed him though to wound the man! But how comes it? Perhaps the Marquis has not arrived yet?—Florville, resumed Madame de B—, hours are flying, it is getting dark.—What does this stranger trouble his head about? replied the Countess. Faublas, do not listen to him, stay here—how much have I suffered since yesterday! How fatal will love turn out when it ceases being happy! how unbearable will its tortures appear when there is no sharer in them!—What are you saying, my Eleanor? How I grieve at your sorrows!—Do you? Well, if it is so, I shall feel comforted; I am satisfied, let us begone.—I repeated the words—let us begone.

Chevalier, cried out the Marchioness, are you forgetful of a pressing duty summoning you?—Alas! it is not in Paris that you are wanted.

I got loose from the Countess's arms, and from the shaft of her gig, leaped upon the horse which the Marchioness was presenting to me. He is going to fight! said Madame de Lignolle. I will follow him! I wish to be present at that fight!—The Vicomte, anxious to quiet her, answered: Make yourself easy, he is out of danger; the fight is over.—Over! repeated she, sorrowfully, over! he is at Fromonville then? The ingrate forsakes me once more! the barbarian sacrifices me!

She wished to stop me, the Vicomte's men stopped her. She uttered screams of inquietude and of rage; she fell senseless to the bottom of her vehicle.

Alas! who could not have pitied the too feeling woman, and been melted at sight of her sufferings? I shuddered at her perilous situation. The Marchioness did not attempt to oppose my dismounting, and getting into the Countess's gig again; I even felt extreme emotion at seeing Madame de B— lavish of attention upon Madame de Lignolle. With one hand she supported her head, with the other she rubbed her face and temples over with spirituous waters; with her own handkerchief she

wiped off the cold sweat that moistened her forehead; poor child! would she say, see how extinct are those eyes, which but a moment since shone with so much lustre! what paleness overspreads those cheeks that I have seen coloured with so blooming a vermillion: poor angel!—You alarm me, my dear! do you think there is any danger?—Danger? Perhaps. The Countess is of a violent temper, and she already seems to love you much.—Very much, indeed! Besides, of late she has been slightly indisposed; she frequently is sick.—What! cried Madame de B—, is she with child already? So much the better. But this effusion of lively joy soon made room for a tone of commiseration: she then continued thus: So much the better—for you; but for her!—for her it is a dreadful, fatal, cruel event; attended with many dangerous consequences.—She is really exposed; but how much am I to be pitied too! what a state of embarrassment I am in! The one is here dying lest I should leave her, and the other grieves because I have left her. Tell me, then, what am I to do! Let me hear what I am to determine?

Just now, interrupted she, I invited you to

begone; I now confess that if I were in your place, I should be equally at a loss to resolve the question. It is proper you should consult your own heart, but you must also be actuated by circumstances.—Consult my own heart; there I find only irresolution and strife. With regard to circumstances, are they not, on either side, equally perplexing, pressing, and imperious? Oh, my dear friend! I beg of you, pity the situation I am in, it is really cruel! put an end to my perplexity; advise me.—What can I say to you? The laws which duty imposes are not to be misinterpreted. It is true, however, that it would appear cruel to forsake the Countess, situated as she is. She is of a violent disposition, you believe she is with child, and the poor little creature loves you, as you must be loved, a great deal too much! To go now, would certainly be delivering her up to agitations which might cost her her life. It seems to me probable, that Sophia, being of a much milder temper—Sophia, long since accustomed to your absence, to her being forsaken, will perhaps, support less impatiently—yet, I would not warrant it so. It is very possible that your wife, not seeing you return, and thinking her-

self deserted forever, may become a prey to despair.

To despair! yes!—repeated Madame de Lignolle, in a feeble voice, and who had just recovered the use of her senses—to despair!

She knew me again, and said: Is it you, Faublas? You have not left me, then? You have acted right: stay here, I insist upon it, stay here. You, barbarous unknown, said she to the Marchioness, leave us. Cruel man? you do not feel for my miseries. You never have wanted another to pity you! You have never loved, then——

The Vicomte, laying hold of her hand, interrupted her: If you knew to whom you are addressing that reproach; if you knew that Madame de Lignolle, although very miserable, is less to be pitied than the unhappy creature who is now speaking! I, too, have experienced a similar flame to that which devours you. I also have known the transient delight of love, and its inconsolable regrets. Countess! unhappy Countess! you have much more to suffer, if you are doomed to suffer as much as I have!

My eyes happened to meet those of the Mar-

chioness; they were bathed in tears; and the sight of them caused my heart to throb.

Can it be true, continued she with greater vehemence, that a malignant deity presides over human destinies, and takes an abominable pleasure in making the most unequal distribution of his precious gifts? Is it true, that, by means of the refinement of a barbarous calculation, he is prodigal only towards a very small number of privileged mortals, that he might more certainly torment the immense crowd of individuals maltreated by his avarice? What! tell me, young man, has an unmerciful deity, who has favoured you too highly, endowed you with graces that attract, wit that seduces, talents that are envied, beauty which is admired, feelings that please, and eyes that charm the soul—  
—with all these accomplishments, besides a thousand more, the collection whereof, perhaps, has never shone but in you, merely with a view of causing your rivals to despair, and of torturing your mistresses? Constancy, that single virtue you are deficient of, has that jealous god refused it to you in order that, in this world, no female might expect high felicity without a mixture of sorrow; and that no man can be an



absolute model of perfection? What! are all of your same sex, who, as yet unacquainted with you, would presume to contend for the prize of valour, or of tenderness of heart, are all such as nature has favoured the most necessarily to appear as having incurred only his displeasure, when the moment of comparing them to you is come? What! must all the fair who happen to see you, be invincibly compelled to love you, without the least delay?—alas! and reduced to repentance of the longest duration? Oh, destiny!

The Countess had listened to the Marchioness with a mixture of attention and surprise.—Whoever you may be, said she to her, love is well known to you. You speak of it as I might do myself. Now I am reconciled to you a little; but allow us to leave you. Let us begone, Faublas; let us begone. What! you are struck dumb?—won't you come?

Still agitated by various apprehensions, and as many desires, I cast my eye upon the Marchioness, expressive of my irresolution, and to what degree I wanted her to guide my determination.

The Vicomte comprehended my meaning,

and explained: Truly I would not hesitate; I would go to Fromonville.—To Fromonville? interrupted the Countess.—To-morrow, resumed the other; but this evening I would return to Paris with Madame de Lignolle,—That is what may be called good advice! exclaimed the Countess; I approve highly of the latter part; and you, Faublas?—So do I, my Eleanor.

In the first transport of her joy, Madame de Lignolle embraced Madame de B—; and I confess it was not without a lively pleasure, that, during some minutes, I felt united, and pressed the hands of those two charming women within mine.

Sir, resumed the Countess, addressing the Vicomte, we are going to bid you adieu; but, before we part, permit me to ask you a question. I am jealous, and I plainly confess it. You were nearly weeping just now; you are unhappy in your amours, and it is the Chevalier's fault. Do me the service to inform me who the fair lady is, whom the Chevalier has seduced from you: sir, pursued Madame de Lignolle, who was at a loss to guess at the cause of the embarrassment which the Marchioness could not conceal, you will excuse his friend

for thinking that he deserved being preferred; but at least I believe, and I do not aim at paying you a compliment, that you merited the lady.—Hesitating for awhile, sir, continued she, I beg you will conclude the unasked-for confidence; you have nothing to apprehend for your secret, you have been made acquainted with mine.—Madame, answered the Vicomte, who had settled in his own mind the answer to be returned to the very interesting question: in a moment of anxiety one is liable to complain of a thousand things.—Ah! pray tell me what mistress of yours Faublas has?—Madam, as this gentleman has been telling you, I am related to M. de B—; I adored his wife.—His wife! do not mention her! I detest her!—You are ungrateful then, for she loves you.—Who told you so?—Herself.—Does she know me?—She has had the pleasure of seeing and of speaking to you.—Where?—That question I must not answer.—Never mind! yes, she is wrong to love me, for I repeat it over again, I abominate her.—May I ask for what reason?—For what reason! She is a dangerous woman!—Her enemies will protest she is——An intriguer.—Courtiers will report

she is——Not handsome enough to be so much spoken of.—Women will say that of her.—A woman of gallantry.—She wants neither wit nor attractions. How were it possible not to make of her the heroine of some adventure?—Some! she has had a thousand.—Are any favourites of hers mentioned?—There are, indeed! I, who see very little company, know of three.—Will you please to name them?—The Count de Rosambert——A true coxcomb, he always denied it.—A palpable reason! Faublas——Oh! as for that one, I do not dispute it.—The third, M. de—.—M. de—! inquired the Marchioness, whom I saw at the same moment several times to blush and to turn pale.—Yes, M. de—, the new minister, to whom she surrendered her person, to obtain the Chevalier's release. What I am saying now hurts you?—M. de —, resumed the Marchioness, with less perturbation, but more conspicuous astonishment.—That hurts you!—I can see that you are still deep in love.—M. de —! this is a very new charge.—Because the intrigue is of no ancient date.—But at least, there should be some evidence.—How can there? They did not call any witnesses.—Yet, madam, you presume to

certify—Because everybody does.—Everybody? Chevalier, you knew of it then?—I have been told so, Vicomte, but I would not believe it.—That does not signify, returned he, with a discontented air, you ought to have let me know.—To be sure, said the Countess, to apprise a man of honour of the bad conduct of a coquette, who imposes upon him, is rendering him a great service. I sincerely pity you, sir, for having been caught in that lady's net, you seem to be deserving of a better lot.

Let us now return to what concerns me. You are no longer uneasy about the Chevalier, I hope?—I beg your pardon, madam, I am.—Mind that, sir, exclaimed the Countess, looking at me. Does he visit the Marchioness often? she asked the Vicomte.—Sometimes.—You see, sir, you go to her sometimes! So then he is still in love with her?—A little, I believe.—So then, sir, it appears you are in love with her!—The Vicomte interrupted her, saying: you must not quite abide by my assertion, however; I am a party concerned, perhaps I don't view things in a fair light.—Oh! you do though, sir, you can't be mistaken. As for you, Faublas, I shall know how to prevent

your visiting that coquette and loving her!—We are going to leave you, pursued she, addressing Madame de B—. After the scene which you have just witnessed, I rely upon your keeping my secret, although I were not to beg of you so to do; for the whole of your appearance is truly prepossessing.—If I had room for a third person in my gig, I should be very happy to offer you a seat.—I confess I should be proud of being further acquainted with you. Come and see me at Paris. The Chevalier will oblige me by introducing you. But you may do better still, come by yourself, you don't want anybody to introduce you. Come, and I promise, since it really grieves you too much, never to speak ill to you of the Marchioness, though she is a wicked woman.

We departed. I gave a few louis d'ors to the postilion who took us back to la Croix-Saint-Ouen, where the Countess had hired him, and who promised not to speak a word of all he had seen. Madame de Lignolle thought it incumbent upon her to silence, by dint of a remuneration, her man-servant, la Fleur, who she had been obliged to take with her, and who of course was made acquainted with our amours.

My youthful companion meanwhile loaded me with caresses, which I repaid in kind: with reproaches that I was no longer deserving of: and with questions which it was impossible for me to answer. In vain did I observe to her, that she ought to be satisfied at her lover being neither killed, wounded, nor obliged to leave her and his native country: she disapproved the secret which I was bound to keep by my word of honour, which, she said, I should not have given.

The Vicomte de Florville naturally became the topic of our conversation. The Countess, who appeared to observe most attentively the impression her discourse made upon me, said: that young man is very amiable!—Very amiable, indeed.—Adorned with graces.—Very much so.—A pleasing countenance.—Very agreeable.—A very handsome face!—Yes, very handsome.—His voice is as sweet as yours.—I think so.—His, however, is rather too clear: it seems to want a something—He is but a youth.—You are right. How old may he be? sixteen?—At most.—Never mind, repeated she, with affectation, I find him a charming young man.—Charming.—He seems to have a deal

of wit, and exquisite feelings.—He has, my dear.

I thus spoke by monosyllables, for fear of saying too much; and affected great indifference, in order to remove all manners of suspicion.

Will you have the goodness to answer me otherwise? said Madame de Lignolle, in a pet.—What is the matter;—The matter is that your *sang froid* hurts me.—My *sang froid*!—Yes, I seem to have paid particular attention to that young man; I speak of him in high terms, and you do not appear to be alarmed in the least.—What should I be alarmed at?—That is what I complain of.—You do not manifest the least inquietude!—I replied, laughing, because indeed, my dear, I can find no occasion.—How so, sir, wherefore should not you feel a little jealous? for my part I am of a jealous disposition.—I shall repeat it, my Eleanor, the Vicomte cannot alarm me.—Don't laugh, sir; I don't like people to laugh when I am speaking reason to them.

Be pleased to tell me wherefore the Vicomte cannot?—Wherefore? because he is a mere child.—Would you have people think that you



are old?—My security besides is founded on the esteem with which you inspire me.—The esteem, sir, the esteem! let me have less esteem, and a little more love. I have often heard it said, at the time when I did not comprehend it, and now that I understand it well, I am sensible it is but too true; one is never truly in love unless one is very jealous. Become jealous if you wish to please me.—Be you content, madam, then; I confess that I was very uneasy while you were surveying the Vicomte.—That, interrupted she, by giving me a kiss, that is what I call speaking plain; that is what you should have said at first. Nevertheless, Faublas, you need not be alarmed. I only admired the Vicomte, that I might admire you more. I was saying to myself: That youth looks very well, but my lover looks still better. The face of my lover is not less charming, and he has a much finer shape. One may observe in his countenance, in his whole person, I know not what, more imposing, more stately, which astonishes without causing terror.—That does not frighten me, it gives me pleasure—he has wit! and feelings!—Could the Vicomte be possessed of as much as you, who keep me all day

long laughing, and sometimes makes me shed tears! Then it is that I feel very happy, for you are not like other men who make game of our tears: on the contrary, my good friend, you console me by sharing in my grief; you know what it is to weep; you can weep too. Be perfectly easy. I know you to be as much superior to that young man, as he appears to be above all those I have ever seen. Tell me, does your father love the Vicomte?—Very much.—Well, he ought to have your sister married to that young man. They would make a charming pair.—This idea, which appears so very simple, never would have occurred to my mind.—To be sure, I see some obstacles in the way: the Vicomte is smitten with his Marchioness.—’Tis a great pity. Do you know why I invited her to come to my house? I shall tell you, for how could I conceal anything from you? He is jealous of you, for he is in love with Madame de B—. He will let me know if you visit her.—A good contrivance, certainly!—I am not to be duped by your shammed gaiety? you don’t laugh from the bottom of your heart, I know. I have ever intended to prevent you from visiting that wicked woman, and chance has just

supplied me with means, which, I never would forgive myself if I were to neglect.

We were proceeding towards Paris, it is true, my Sophia; but do not fret; be comforted, it was also towards Fromonville. Sophia, I was going again to your rival's home in quest of one of those nights which I fancied were so short; but pardon me. Believe me, I thought less of the pleasures of the next night than of the delight of the day following, of that day when, in the arms of my wife, I should at last enjoy that supreme happiness so long wished for. Rejoice, my Sophia; it is true that at this very moment I receive a kiss from Madame de Lignolle; it is also true that this sweet favour is the reward of a sigh which Eleanor had surprised; but, oh, my Sophia, rejoice that so tender a sigh I did not heave on her account.

We left off travelling post at Bourget, that same village where I had dismissed Jasmin; we took the Countess's horses which had been left there at an inn, and which soon brought us to Paris. It may easily be conceived that Faublas, now dressed in such clothes as he should have always worn, could not go to Mad. de Lignolle's to represent Mademoiselle de Bru-

mont, previous to having changed his dress, at Madame de Fonrose's house, therefore we determined to alight.

Naughty, cruel children, said the Baroness. Whither have you been? We are half-starved, replied the Countess, let us have a bit of supper.

While we were beginning to carve a fat fowl that had just been brought up, Madame de Fonrose was saying to Madame de Lignolle: I called at your hotel at dinner time, and was much alarmed upon hearing that, exasperated at Mademoiselle de Brumont's flight, you were just gone in search of her. It was a few hours, added she, addressing me, since M. de Belcour, in company with Mademoiselle de Faublas, had paid me a short visit. Both were setting out for Fromonville, through a conviction that you were gone there to fight. They did not imagine that any other interest, short of that of honour, could prevent your running with them, to throw yourself at the feet of your wife. They both trembled for you; both, I must tell you openly, will be a prey to deadly inquietude, if you have not joined them before the middle of the day; it will soon begin to dawn.

The Countess could think no longer of her

meal, which she had hardly begun. She interrupted the Baroness, to declare she could not suffer me to leave her; she even added that it appeared very surprising that Madame de Fonrose, who pretended to be her friend, would take the liberty in her presence of giving such advice to her lover. The Baroness was not in the least at a loss to find an excuse. If you adore the son, said she, I love the father. M. de Belcour would never forgive me, if in a circumstance of this kind, I was to keep his son away from him. Besides, my dear friend, what do you demand of the Chevalier? That he should violate, to no purpose, all the laws of common decorum! I am far from advising him to commit a base action; I do not prescribe his forsaking you; I advise him to go and meet Sophia, to bring her back, and after that to behave like a true man of the world, like the best husbands, who know how to conciliate the love they bear to their mistresses, and the good proceedings their wives have a right to claim. If he were to adopt another mode of conduct, it would be the ruin of you. Tell me, for instance, can the Chevalier continue to live in the house of his mistress, when his wife will be

no longer absent. Is he thus publicly to expose the despair of the one, and the favours granted by the other? Admitting that you were so blinded by your passion as to expect from him such an extravagant behaviour, and that he were weak enough not to refuse you, I ask you whether everybody would not soon know that M. de Faublas has turned himself into a female under your roof, because he had grown tired of being a man in his own home! I shall not speak of M. de Lignolle; let us hope that the protecting God of lovers will do in favour of that husband as much as he generally does in behalf of others; let us hope that that worthy husband will be the last man in Paris to know that you have rendered him an object of ridicule; but will his friends view with tranquillity that he is daily made to be laughed at?

His friends! What care I for his friends! answered the Countess, who so far had only opposed tears and nonsensical exclamations to the prudent counsels of the Baroness.—What care you? replied Madame de Fonrose. Alas! but do you expect to detain the Chevalier, in opposition to the sobbings of his widowed wife, who will not fail to claim him, notwithstanding—

ing the inexhaustible gossiping of your loquacious aunt, who will come every morning to stammer out her gothic principles; in spite of Captain de Lignolle, that famous man who might leave his plundering crew to ride hither post, to frighten you with his broad mustachios and long sword: regardless of the public, ever jealous, indiscreet, uncautious, that will forever be trumpeting either those follies which ought not to be mentioned, or revising scandalous tales which should always be buried in oblivion; that public, which, respectful to no one, not even to themselves, will ridicule the husbands whom they pity, protect the wives whom they blame, and severely condemn those faults with which they daily amuse and feed their malignity; finally, notwithstanding the Baron, who—In spite of the whole universe, Madam.—What an answer? Are you out of your mind, or do you think I exaggerate? M. de Belcour, of whom I was going to speak to you, is little known to you. If you provoke him too far, he is capable of forcing his son away from your very bed-room.—And if people are not afraid of carrying matters with me.—What will you do?—I will kill myself.—What a nice

resource! I pity you. I pity you, since you are not sensible that it is better to sacrifice for a moment a precious object, to recover it afterwards, and possess it undisturbed, than to expose one's self by keeping it a few days too long, to die from the regret of having lost it.

Madame de Fonrose was still speaking, and to no purpose, when we heard a carriage entering her yard. It could only be that of M. de Lignolle, I had time to embrace my friend, to seize a leg of a fowl, and to make my escape into the dressing closet of the Baroness.

A moment after I heard the Count enquire of the ladies how they were. Wondering at his wife, who seldom eat out, not having returned home at three in the morning; he had guessed that she had supped at the Baroness's, and was taken ill there. He asked her whether she had been able to join Mademoiselle de Brumont that day.—I have, sir, and I hope she will return to my house.—She certainly will, interrupted he, for I have exacted a promise to that purpose, from her father. Till such time as she does come, think, Countess, that it is late; accept a seat in my carriage.—I am much



obliged to you, replied she, dryly, I don't wish to return home before daylight.

I might easily have heard the end of that conversation, in which I was concerned.—Sophia, dearer interests still occupy my mind.

The all-powerful seduction of the object present, ceases for a moment to act immediately upon me; and that decisive moment may fix in your favour a victory which has remained too long uncertain. Your rival is no longer by the side of me to make me forgetful of your troubles, by the sight of her sorrows; and of your love by her caresses. Her voice alone strikes mine ear, but reaches not my heart; filled up with the recollection of you, Sophia, I have just seen you fainting away: dying! I have gazed upon your charms, and been penetrated with your despair! I have shuddered at the pains you endure; the idea of the felicity that awaits us has caused me to shiver!

Whoever is reading my narrative with some attention, must remember, that not long since a pretty chamber-maid dressed my hair exactly in the same closet in which I was now standing. That same reader will also recollect, that on that day, pressed by the desire of meeting the

Countess and escaping the Baron, I was conducted by a private staircase into Madame de Fonrose's yard. Now, on the reverse, to join my father and fly away from my mistress, I felt, in the dark, to find my way out of the house, which I knew something of, I reached the private staircase next the yard, and soon after I got into the street.

Replete with tender solicitude, M. de Belcour had guessed at what no other father could have foreseen. As it was not impossible, said he, when setting off, that some particular reasons might compel me to return through the metropolis, the porter had been ordered to sit up all night in waiting; and my servant to keep a post-chaise ready for me. The Baron and his son were too much liked for the commands of the one, and the interest of the other to be neglected. Upon my arrival at the hotel I had only to step into my chaise, and my faithful Jasmin insisted upon accompanying me as a courier. At every post-house, in consequence, there were always horses ready; and, thanks to my prodigality, the postilions, did not complain of being called up too early; they

would call me *monseigneur*, and we flew on as if we had had wings.

I had travelled that same road two days before; but what a happy change in my situation had thirty-six hours only produced! I am not now going to a foreign land, there to regret my native country; I carry not with me the remorse of having immolated an enemy, who sought a too just revenge. It is at Fromonville that my father, ere long made easy by my presence, will press me to his bosom. There it is that my wife presently—We shall never arrive!—Postilions, drive on!—Presently I shall cover her with kisses, embrace her knees, solicit the reward of my extreme tenderness. Adelaide, it is true, will be there—can't we send her away? What! must we defer till night? What an age! But the night!—the night! I shall never spend one more delicious! How slow these hacks go! Postilion, why don't you go on? And to-morrow—to-morrow I shall be on this road again! but I shall have Sophia by my side! I shall bring my wife back to Paris! I shall take her to my parental home!—to the chamber of Hymen, close to that *du celibat* which will be empty! forever empty! I shall

leave my wife's apartment no more! there I shall spend the day—my whole life—I shall hear her tell over and over the recital of the sufferings she has endured whilst separated from me! and I shall relate a hundred times over what I have suffered—all the misfortunes that have befallen me. Ah, no! I will not tell her how much the Marchioness is to be pitied, and how tenderly I commiserate her affliction. Sophia, who is of a suspicious disposition, might feel uneasy; and I propose not only to remain faithful to her, but to spare her the tortures of jealousy. Neither shall I mention the Countess—the Countess! she is now very lonely! very much astonished! very sad! She is weeping; and accuses me of being a barbarian! In truth, I ought at least to have spoken a few words to her, to let her know—to prepare her—What a rate this fellow drives me at! Postilion! you fly!—gently, gently! Whither are you going so fast?—To Villeneuve-St-George, replied he, holding his horses, on the road to Fontainebleau, to Fromonville.—To Fromonville! that's right! Well! why do you stop?—Is it not you?—See, what a deal of time is lost! go on; use your whip, and go

faster!—Gently! go faster! you don't know your own mind. Hitherto I have been driving full gallop; I can do no better.—You are right, my friend, perfectly right; but I beg of you, go a little faster.

The chaise, which I cursed a thousand times, rolled for seven hours longer. At length, I discovered the bridge of Montcour, and, on the road to Fromonville, two beloved persons, I soon receive their embraces, and partake of their joy. One of them enquires whether I have not been dangerously wounded; the other, whether I am obliged again to leave France? No, my dear Adelaide, I am not wounded. No, father, we shall not leave our country—but I beg of you, let us run. How many thanks I am bound to return to you. You have left her to come and meet me! how kind! Come, let us fly, present her husband to her, witness—What! father, you cast down your eyes with sadness! What! sister, you weep! it is all over! Sophia! absence! She has not been able to resist her being forsaken—She still breathes, exclaimed the Baron, but—She loves you, interrupted my sister, but—I understand you!

this is the third time then that her tyrant has robbed me of her.

They returned me no answer; both continued silent; attentive, however, to prevent, lest the effect of a first movement might cost me my life, M. de Belcour seized my sword and pistols; Adelaide stretched out her trembling arm to support her brother, whom she had seen to turn pale and stagger. My dear beloved, you are not strong enough! Faublas has just fallen, almost lying, upon that same turf which two days before he scarcely skimmed over, when to follow a mistress, now deserted, he hurried away from his wife, whom, on the present day, he regrets so vainly too!

Adelaide! alas! I entreat of you, pity your brother!—Father, leave me! let me die! she is taken away from me! she thinks I am guilty! Sophia does not know whom I have left for her; Sophia does not know that I would give one half of my existence to be allowed to consecrate to her the other half. She is carried away from me! she believes I am guilty! let me die.

Meanwhile, Adelaide was holding me within her arms, and lavishing upon me the most ten-

der caresses; the tears, which I could see watering her eyes, softened the bitterness of those that I shed, and my father soothed my affliction by sympathising with me: Too dear, and too unhappy son, would he say, will not the most ardent passions cease tormenting thy stormy youth? and adversity, which so long since has taken the charge of offering thee cruel lessons: will adversity, henceforth, leave me no other duty to perform, than to offer thee consolations, either too weak or totally impotent? Oh, my son, I pity thee, but thou owest me also some compassion.

Father, is it known, at least, what is become of her? which way, on which road has she been carried off by her ravisher? you don't answer me! it is true then that I have lost her entirely, that I have no hope left! Now a long interval stands between us; the day before yesterday I saw her yonder! yonder, sister, look, my dear Adelaide, look, and your sobs will redouble: from this spot you can discover the gate which my weak hands could only shake, that gate which I ought to have broken down. Your friend was there, my dearest. Now we are separated by a long interval! Sophia! Sophia! a

persecuting god presides over our amours. One might say, that he sometimes points out to you your husband, only in order that you may feel more acutely the pain of his absence; that he allows me to have a glance at you, merely, to awaken in my heart the grief of losing you: yes, that cruel god occasionally brings us near one another, but to enjoy the dreadful pleasure of parting us afresh.—I fly to Luxembourg, my lover follows me there; a few hours after she finds a father, who, on the following day, carried her away from her husband! Through a thousand perils I penetrate as far as the convent wherein she is confined; and I am allowed to admire her only for one moment! Chance at last brings me near her new prison: a dolorous scream informs me that my wife is there, that she knows me again, I myself can see her, and I see her dying, and yet honour—honour! at least I thought so. Fatal Marchioness! this is not the first time that you have made us miserable. Imperious honour summons me away, and when I return, I have lost my whole! Sophia's ravisher—Is it possible a father should act contrary to nature? The barbarian! What has he more to reproach his adorable and un-



happy daughter with? Of what fault does he accuse me but which my marriage has made amends for?—Of what crime, but which my miseries have expiated? Wherefore would he have two married lovers perish, consumed by their useless desires? Why would he wish to plunge both his children into the same grave? Oh! father! father!—

This once, said he, du Portail did not go away from us without apprising me of his motives and his determination. A letter that he has left for me.—A letter! let me see it; show it to me, then.—Let us first, my good friend, reach the nearest village.

We entered an inn at Montcour. The Baron wished to read my father's last letter to himself; but compelled to yield to my entreaties, he handed it over to me:—

“Since your son once more has discovered my retreat, since he obstinately perseveres in pursuing his victims, it is requisite, Monsieur le Baron, I should inform you, at least, of all the misfortunes of my daughter, that I should reveal horrid dealings.

“You know into what a nearly unavoidable

snare my Sophia was allured: you will never forget in what place, and how the unhappy Lovinski found his long-wished-for Dorliska, less deserving of blame than of pity, though ever so guilty. Baron, the rape of that unfortunate, and no less respectable child, was not the most heinous offence your unworthy son had committed."

The most heinous offence of your unworthy son! What expressions! What a shocking imposture! You shuddered at it yourself, father! Monsieur le Baron, I protest it shall be washed off in the blood of the calumniator. But what have I said?—he is your friend!—he is the father of Sophia! Make yourself easy, sister; fear not, father——forgive the first transport of surprise and of anger——forgive——

Hand it to me, said the Baron; let me go on with the letter.—Oh, no!—allow me, I beseech you.

"The day on which I bestowed upon him his beloved, at the very moment when preparations were making for their union, I heard, in the High Street of Luxembourg, a stranger enquir-

ing after the Chevalier de Faublas; and notwithstanding her disguise, I knew her to be the first who trained your son in the detestable art of seducing the wives, and deceiving their husbands. She was come, most likely as agreed upon, to join in the place of his exile, the murderer of her husband."

Great God! father, I can take my oath it is not true! I was ignorant of the Marchioness intending to follow me to Luxembourg. I did not know—I willingly think so, my son. I cannot think you are capable of committing the black outrage which du Portail has so promptly suspected. But he is a father, and an unhappy one. We must excuse him, pity him, strive to find him out again, and to soothe him—go on.

"At this fatal apparition, I foresaw all the misfortunes that threatened my Dorliska; I saw but one way of rescuing her from the danger of opprobrium, and of being publicly deserted; I, however, reached the church, doubtful as yet whether I should adopt a resolution which I deemed most violent. An audacious rival, a total stranger to decorum, appeared

nearly at the same time with us before the altar. Sacrilegious woman! in the face of that God who hears the oaths of husbands, she was come to summon him to violate all his!

“What did your cruel son, the unworthy pupil of a shameless woman, the base seducer of a defenceless girl, expect? What did he expect when he tore her away from the respectable retreat which her virtues embellished, when he obtained from the other the pompous sacrifice of a corrupted world, by which she was idolised? What did he expect! to make an exhibition of himself before all Europe; to become intoxicated with the glory of dragging, fastened to the same car, a seduced maid and an adulterous wife; to associate his two mistresses to similar diversions, to a similar ignominy; to carry from country to country Mademoiselle de Pontis, who had to share a universal lover, and public contempt, with the Marchioness de B—?”

Mademoiselle de Pontis to share public contempt with the Marchioness de B—!—Ah, father! what an imposture! Ah, sister! what a blasphemy!

“Such were his objects, which I had foreseen; the execution whereof I prevented. Thanks to my vigilance, Dorliska was saved: but events have justified all my suspicions. It has never been known exactly what became of the Marchioness during the six weeks that your son continued in the vicinity of Luxembourg. They were undoubtedly living there together.”

Is that true, said Adelaide?—It is true that Madame de B— would come to see me now and then; but I did not know it was she who came.—How so?—My dear, that is what I cannot explain; it would require too much time.—I am not satisfied with that answer. I find it obscure; what pains me most is that M. de Portail is sometimes right, when he addresses to you his reproaches; that proves that you have behaved extremely wrong towards my dear friend. I tire you, brother? well, let us see. Go on.

“She was seen, with unprecedented effrontery, to re-appear at Court, a few days after the return of her lover to the capital; and although all her intrigues could not prevent the Chev-

alier being sent to prison, every one knows that it is by means of prostituting her person that she has procured his release."

By means of prostituting her person! No, father, I cannot give credit to the assertion! It would be too painful for me to believe it.—Weak-minded youth! replied he; what can I care for the grief you might feel upon the occasion? Resume your reading!

"What use did he make of his liberty? Sophia not returning, her place must be filled up by another. The Chevalier de Faublas is not a man to be satisfied with one single conquest; he must absolutely have two victims at a time, two victims at least. What I am at a loss to conceive is, that after having recently discovered my retreat he has thought fit to come and exhibit to Sophia the new rival whom he prefers to her."

Whom I prefer to her! while it is for Sophia that I forsake the Countess! the Countess who is now calling after me, and who mourns! the Countess! Ah, father! if you knew how dear

I am to her! what feelings she is possessed of! how lovely she is! how—The Baron interrupted me: Do you know, sir, what you are speaking to me about?—I am wrong, father, I am wrong, but I find myself in so embarrassing a situation—I beg you ten thousand pardons.

“That inconceivable step, the motions whereof I cannot guess at, is most likely the forerunner of some other iniquitous mystery, which will be discovered at some future period. Who is that young person in whose company I have recognised your son, dressed in female attire? Some simple maid, whom her innocence will not suffer to protect, or some inexperienced wife, whose rising virtues he is going to corrupt. Who is that middle-aged man that accompanied them? Some unfortunate husband whom he will blast with ridicule and shame, or a credulous, confiding father whose friendship he will betray.

“Baron, you are also a father; but you appear never to be willing to remember it. I shall tell you candidly, your indulgence is inexcusable. Dread, my dear friend, being soon brought to shed tears of blood on account of it;

dread lest heaven, tired at last, should punish at the same time the disorderly conduct of the son and the excessive weakness of the father; dread lest one day in his anger, he may send an avenger to my daughter, and a seducer to yours."

An avenger to his daughter! du Portail, I shall see that avenger whom you announce! du Portail, if he is tardy in coming, Faublas will go and fetch him!—Be calm, exclaimed the Baron; you were promising just now—How, sir, not satisfied with threatening me in an indirect manner, he, besides, dares to insult my sister! A seducer to my dear Adelaide!—See, my friend, how inconsiderate and cruel passions will render us: the bare idea that Adelaide can be seduced throws her brother into high rage! he will not forgive it to the man whose daughter, replete with the love of virtue, was yet induced to commit the most blameable excesses of criminal amours! Faublas, on account of a surmise which he finds offensive, speaks of arming against his father-in-law; and yet at Luxembourg Lovinski did not think of avenging the misconduct of his Dorliska upon a



foreign ravisher!—Allow me, father, to be informed of his final determination.

“Let my example at least be to you a useful warning. I contributed myself to the wanderings of the Chevalier, and although I was but an involuntary accomplice, it was not long before I was punished for it. All the misfortunes that overwhelm me proceed from that ungrateful young man and his mistress, whose criminal amours I continued a tranquil spectator of. Engaged soon after in an unjust quarrel, I had the mortification of violating the wisest law of an hospitable state that had supplied me with friends, and almost a mother country; my hands, besmeared with blood, made my unjust cause to triumph;\* I myself, in short escorted my daughter in her elopement, and assisted her ravisher in degrading her.

“Ah! how much less to be pitied than myself is the adored wife, whose tragical end I bewailed twelve years ago! She reposes in peace in the forests of la Sula; a premature death has protected her against the sad mis-

\* Remember that at la Porte Maillot, where I wounded the Marquis, du Portail killed his antagonist.

fortunes which pursue her daughter, and her friend.

“Thanks, however, be given to Thee, Eternal Providence, whose decrees are ever to be blessed; thanks be rendered to thee, merciful God, even in thy persecutions. Thou did'st ordain that Lovinski should survive Lodoiska, that he might one day offer her abused daughter an assistance, alas! very tardy; to oppose at least her complete shame, her approaching disgrace; to protect Dorliska against the last humiliations which her un pitying seducer kept in reserve for her.

“Yes, my sullied daughter, however, has escaped becoming notoriously disgraced. My child may constitute the consolation, joy, and pride of her father.

In this part I was interrupted for a moment by my sobs; certainly, I exclaimed, the pride of her father, of her family, and of her husband! then leaving out a word which a father never ought to have written, which a husband was not to repeat, I read over again that phrase which coloured, in some degree, my resentment and grief, that sentence in favour of which

Sophia's lover forgave du Portail the horrors imputed to the son of the Baron de Faublas. I next resumed my reading.

“Yes, my sullied daughter has escaped becoming publicly degraded. My child may still constitute the consolation, joy, and pride of her father. Adorable girl! the excuse lies in the virtues she has remaining, in her regret for those she possesses no more.”

Her regret! What! Sophia! is it possible you should regret! Alas! I thought absence alone was to excite regret! This is the blow which hurts me the most poignantly.

My tears began to flow in greater abundance. Adelaide wept also; but the Baron seemed willing to take back the fatal letter. I, therefore, was obliged to arm myself with renovated courage to proceed reading it; and was cautious when reading another consoling phrase, to omit, as I had done before, some words which in my opinion should not have been inserted.

“Her excuse lies in the virtues she has remaining in her—And, shall I speak it? in the

numberless invaluable advantages which nature has so prodigally lavished upon her seducer, that wonderful young man that we would all have admired, if he had exerted towards doing good, one half of those efforts it must have cost him to act wrong; if he had been willing in a proper manner to apply to the practice of virtue, the rare qualifications he abused, to perpetrate heinous crimes.

“I have given you, Baron, an account of my just motives, I shall now proceed to inform you of my irrevocable determination.

“From the impenetrable retreat in which I have sought a refuge, I shall always watch my persecutor. My Dorliska is infinitely dear to me; I adore in her, the living image of a wife, whom I regret daily. Judge, whether I do not wish her most ardently to be happy. Ah! with what transport would I sacrifice to her fondest desires the resentment of my personal injuries! But the man who seduced his lover, shall never obtain his wife, but after having deserved her, and whoever availed himself of Sophia’s innocence to impose upon her, shall never deceive me. I have too well learned how to dread his artful mistress, even to trust to

mere outside. In vain would he now be at the pains of assuming the man of good morals, I would only consider him as an hypocrite, so long as the Marchioness is an inhabitant of this world. I give you my word of honour for that; although Faublas should appear entirely reformed, he shall not see Sophia again, till such time as righteous heaven has ordained the confinement or death of Madame de B—.

“ But I dwell upon suppositions which flatter without blinding me. I speak of an amendment which I do not expect. No doubt but a God, too equitable to encourage great disorders by granting impunity, has in reserve for the Marchioness a memorable catastrophe. But that example of her punishment, though it were exhibited this very day to alarm all such as resemble her, would come too late for your son. Your son was no sooner corrupted than he became a corruptor. He will grow worse, daily more and more in the company of his associates, who are professional libertines. He will be seen coolly to prepare with them those base tricks which they have called *rouries*. In default of husbands, and fathers who seldom know how to be revenged, ennui, infirmities,

and sorrows, will soon attack him in his exhausted prime. Though young he will be afflicted with premature old age; and if he does not attempt his own life, he must fall by the sword of an enemy; he must unavoidably meet with an untimely end.

“Meanwhile, I shall have laboured without ceasing to cure my daughter of her fatal passion. The same God that pursues the wicked, watches over the righteous. When Sophia’s persecutor, heart-rent with remorse, descends into his grave, she, reinstated in her own estimation, will breathe a new life: my attention will also contribute to heal the wound in her heart. Subsequent to dreadful storms, I shall see her enjoy days of sunshine; my Dorliska will transfer to me her less lively but milder affections. The happy moment will come, when her reason will confirm what her excellent natural disposition has already whispered to her: a daughter, such as she is, can have nothing to regret, so long as she has such a father left as I am.

“I remain, with an esteem which the errors and wrongs of your son have not altered, Monsieur le Baron, your friend,

“LE COMTE LOVINSKI.”

Surprise, inquietude, and even despair, had supported me during the perusal of this long and cruel letter.

When I had finished reading it, I collected all my powers to ask M. de Belcour how far my wife had been followed; and he had no sooner answered me, that she had not possibly been traced beyond *la Croisiere*,\* than I fainted away.

I soon recovered the use of my senses, owing to my sister's attendance upon me; my spirits were revived when I heard the voice of my father. This dear parent, flattering me with hopes which, perhaps, he did not entertain himself, urged me to commence, in company with him and my sister, researches which, he said, would prove more successful. While he was speaking to me, my whole attention was drawn upon a paper that had fallen almost under my feet, by the side of my sister. It was the Countess's letter, which my father had neglected to put in his pocket; I thought of picking it up unperceived, had the good luck to succeed, and felt as highly pleased as if I had got

\* *La Croisiere* is at four leagues below *Montargis*.

possession of a treasure. The letter was abominable, and it was unjust: I was very much maltreated, but at every line I could see the name of Sophia. The cruel and so dear paper, however, I captured.—Ah! Faublas! ah! wretched Faublas! where were you to lose and to find it again?

An unforeseen accident was very near detaining us at Montcour. As we had just stepped all three into the carriage, to reach at least the village of La Croisiere, Adelaide, too delicate to undergo, at the same time, the fatigue of a long journey, and the sorrows of her brother, besides her own agitation, felt, on a sudden, very much indisposed.

Those steeples which you can see from here, father, I know again, they belong to Nemours. Twenty minutes at most, will take us to that town, where we shall find every assistance my sister can stand in need of.

We alighted at an inn, where we had scarcely attended my dear Adelaide for a quarter of an hour, when a courier enquired after me, and presented me with a note, written by an unknown hand, and containing the following intelligence:



“The Vicomte de Florville sends information to the Chevalier Faublas, that M. du Portail, who, towards the evening, the day before yesterday, had left off travelling post, at La Croisiere, has, notwithstanding, procured post horses again at Montargis, on the following midnight.”

Come, father, let us run!—let us fly! You, sister, are not able to follow us!—Can I, said the Baron, leave my daughter at an inn alone, and on a sick bed?—You are right. How sorry I am myself to leave her! yet father, so pressing an interest calls me. Ah! permit me to set off immediately, let my servant alone accompany me. You have my pistols and my sword, give them to Jasmin, and forbid his returning them to me. Your commands will be respected. Rest assured, however, that such a precaution is superfluous; restore my arms, and be easy; I will use them neither against myself, nor against Sophia’s father. Fear nothing from my irritability if I should meet him, nor from my despair, in case I should not. Sophia’s husband will not attempt to obtain her from du Portail, except by means of a speedy justifica-

tion, supplications, and tears, if requisite! I renounce all other means. Though he were unable to meet his father-in-law, though he should still find him unjust and inflexible: your son, though he were doomed to be the most miserable of all lovers, will live for the sake of his sister, and of you. Faublas promises it to his father! the Chevalier swears it.

M. de Belcour, agitated by many inquietudes, could not, as speedily as I had wished, fix upon a determination. He dreaded, perhaps, the danger of leaving at his own discretion, a young man of an impetuous temper, whom fresh adversities threatened with new trials; and most undoubtedly he formed a determination from his apprehending, lest, in case he would persevere to detain me, my painful impatience should prompt me to commit still greater excesses. He, nevertheless, only granted me the long sued for permission to go, but after having exacted my formal promise, if I should make any discovery, to acquaint him with it immediately; that on the contrary, I engaged to return speedily, as soon as I found it probable that longer researches would be superfluous;

and finally, that whatever was to take place, I would let him hear from me every day.

Adieu, sister, my dear Adelaide, farewell. Believe me, I am very sorry to leave you in your present situation. You will be so kind as to send me a bulletin every day; father I beg of you.

At the same time I was so uneasy about my sister's state of health, mine was not much better. Two days filled up my painful excursions; nearly ninety leagues travelled over in less than thirty-six hours; one night out of two entirely lost in journeying on; the other employed in amorous sports; the agitations of the mind and heart, more overpowering a hundred times than bodily fatigue; less would have been wanted to overpower me; and, indeed, my courage and hopes alone supplied me with strength.

Notwithstanding we had travelled with all possible haste, yet we could not reach Montargis before seven in the evening, and there not one single horse was left in the stables of the post office. I had met with a similar disappointment at Puy-la-Lande; but I had forced the postilion from Fontenay to proceed further.

Here, in spite of my offers, prayers, and menaces, the cursed lazy fellow refused going on, producing the regulation to convince me that I could not compel him to go beyond two stages.

Whilst my servant was calling to my relief and help all the infernal spirits, I was making enquiries. The post-master told me that, in fact, a man of a mature age, a very young lady, and two foreigners, came to procure horses in the middle of the night, nearly forty-eight hours since; but he added, that they had only been taken to a distance of half a league, in a cross-road, where they had got out of their carriage. I interrogated the postilion; he was unable to tell what was become of them, but offered to conduct me exactly to the spot where he had left them. I was forced to walk it, tired as I was. Alas! I was put to unnecessary trouble; no one had seen my Sophia!

Sad and dejected, yet unable to give up my last hope, I endeavoured to persuade myself, that M. du Portail, for fear of being pursued, might, by means of horses, stationed purposely in different parts, have taken a long circuitous tour, to go a little further on the same road,

and then proceed on his journey. I therefore despatched Jasmin to fetch post-horses from the next office, with an injunction to have them brought, with all possible speed, to such an inn, at Montargis, which the man, who was going to take me there, indicated, so as to prevent any mistake.

Sir, said the maid, would you wish to have any supper?—I want it, but do not feel in the least inclined. Show me a room; give me a light; I wish to be left quiet.

Quiet! when love has raised within my breast the most raging storms! when a violent fever already caused me to shiver and to burn! Quiet!

Where shall I go to fetch it? The most is near at hand which is going to destroy my last hopes! M. du Portail has an advance of thirty-six hours over me; he seems to have neglected nothing to evade my pursuit. I shall never see her again!

The events are also leagued against me. Madame de B— gets into a scrape precisely when I stand most in want of her all-powerful assistance: my sister takes it into her head to be ill at the moment when the Baron was my

only support. It is all over with me: the propitious star which favoured my enterprises has withdrawn its influence from me. The days of my success are gone forever! Formerly, fortune anticipated all my wishes—now, she delights in opposing my most important designs. It is not a twelvemonth since every one might have envied my destiny; but I shall, ere long, be made the object of universal pity.

Universal pity! Yes, I am, in fact, the most unfortunate of all mortals. I shall never see her again! Not satisfied with carrying her away from me, he is labouring, he says, to cure her, and to this effect imputes atrocious offences to me. Could she imagine, for a single moment, that I was capable of committing them? Could she believe that I am deserving of her resentment—or her contempt, worse than her hatred. Her contempt! To be despised by Sophia! I shudder at the murderous idea.

Has ever anyone been so unfortunate in his amours? It is enough that a female should notice me, and that I should feel interested in her behalf, for mere chance and fate to wage a most cruel war against her. Madame de B—, whom they all accuse; Madame de B— whom

their implacable enmity pursues——what has she done so reprehensible? She has loved me too tenderly. That is the offence which they will never forgive. They want to forbid my ever seeing again the dear woman that has already been too severely punished! They pretend to force me to abhor her! They are not satisfied with having contaminated her when in the prime of life, made her miserable, and perhaps abridged her days of existence, they would wish me to rejoice at, and boast of it! They are bent on my wishing her a premature death! How barbarous! Their jealous rage, I suppose, will soon attack the Countess, too, for she adores me, and I cherish her. The Countess! the Countess is in the family way! Oh, my child! My child! alas! never—never will my father call him his son! My Sophia will not bring him up! Adelaide will refuse to caress him! He will not bear the name of Faublas!—and, perhaps, his birth will cost the mother her character—her life! Spare this once, cruel gods!—persecuting gods, respect her! She is my Sophia—in vain do I implore them—they already arm her own parents against her; they prescribe and command parricide. I can see Absence

and Calumny digging her grave! I see my wife descending into it, and she is no more than fifteen! My destiny had ordained it so! The dearest victim was to be sacrificed the first!

By this means love, which had procured me pleasures, and promised happiness, will now only leave behind bitter regret, inconsolable chagrin, and, what is more horrid still, I shall have occasioned the death of all who have loved me! Unhappy wretch! Let their former troubles be avenged, and their last tortures be prevented! let my death prevent theirs—let a suicide!—Destiny, not I, will have perpetrated the crime. Let Faublas be immolated to save his three children; let them be saved by separating their destinies from his: I shall then not perish wholly, part of me will remain. They will have it in their power to forget me and live. Forget me! never. Neither Sophia, nor the Countess, nor the Marchioness, nor any one. Every creature will retain the recollection of my devotedness. The husbands, meanwhile, joyful at the mourning of their wives, will congratulate themselves upon my not having lived long—not above a short day! The fathers, trembling for their sons, will not fail in exagger-



ating the errors of my life, and the horror of my death; they will delight, especially, in observing, that I had scarcely made my appearance upon the earth. But what care I for the triumph and cruel joy of the former; for the terror and false pity of the latter? What do I care? Ah! that once, only once, two lovers deserving of being so, two true lovers stopping before my tomb for one moment, should recollect my very short errors, and the glorious death that will have expiated them all; let them grant me a tear, and pity me; that, in the first paroxysm of their commiseration, they may say: This generous youth died for many! Had he not deserved being able to love one alone, and living to make her happy? Let two lovers say so, let Eleanor and Sophia repeat it, and my manes will be consoled.

But who will console my father? My father! wherefore does he leave me to myself at this dreadful moment? Wherefore does he suffer my Sophia to be carried away from me? Du Portail, you must return her to me—you shall return her to me, or your blood—I am mad! I speak of subduing him, and cannot even join him! From his retreat, which he says is im-

penetrable, Lovinski braves my menaces, equally impotent as my researches! It is myself who must die.

Poignant regret for a treasure irrecoverably lost, cruel desire of a vengeance not to be obtained, how insupportable you are to me! How you rend a heart susceptible of mild passions only. In vain would I escape your fury. Pursued by frightful thoughts—surrounded by horrid spectres—are they remorsees? Are they furies? By what transports am I agitated? I feel uncommon powers! My rage is proportionate to my strength! I could crush to atoms, and annihilate that hell which is called world. I could bury myself under its ruins!—I could—I will——Wretch! what are you going to do? Stop! Eleanor, whom you are going to immolate—and Sophia! Sophia! your lover, your child, your wife, the Marchioness, intreat you also to spare them—your father and your sister embrace your knees—my hand trembles—my strength fails me—I must sit down! How hot I feel! How thirsty! Oh, my God!

Here is the letter in which my unjust father-in-law prognosticates my tragical end! I just meet the similar passage: he does not attempt

his own life, he must fall by the sword of an enemy, he must meet with an untimely end! Barbarian! Your predictions are commands, commands which I am going to fulfil! But, ferocious tyrant, you yourself will not be able to refuse pitying me, when you will see, that previously to my putting the fatal sentence in execution, I have almost erased it with my tears.

How gloomy the stillness that reigns around me! how alarming the profound silence!—A concentrated despair!—The image of death!—Why am I left here alone?—Where is my sister?—Who keeps my father away?—What is the Marchioness about?—What is become of my Eleanor?—How came they not to unite, to prevent her being taken away from me again, or to force his returning her again to me?—But they all at the same time desert me—I am robbed at once of my only consolation.—I have no relatives, no lovers left. Such among my friends as think of me, shun my presence; and they who do not shun my company, forget me. I am now left solitary, quite alone in the universe!—Well! Death I have left me! Death is less dreadful, than the situation I am in.

Oh! my father! I was forgetful of my prom-

ises; one of the pistols that you had returned to me, had just been placed on the same table as du Portail's letter. I took, I know not why, cruel pleasure in contemplating alternately the sentence and instrument of my death, brought to the last degree of despair, I felt neither agitation, remorse, nor terror: my last hour, perhaps, was come.

On a sudden, my door flew open; and I leave you to guess who rushed towards me: guess whom I press to my bosom, who lavishes caresses on me, whom I overwhelm with my thanks! Look, said she to me, you voluntarily occasion me the bitterest sorrows, and I come running to comfort you: as soon as you have it in your power you make your escape, whilst I am never tired of coming first to meet you.

You have imagined, perhaps, for a moment, that I was embracing the most cherished of the three. Alas! no, Sophia was not restored to me; but I had found again that wife, almost as much so as my own, young, handsome, sensible, and unfortunate, I had found Madame de Lignolle.

You are no strangers to my impatience, and her giddiness, my prompt ardour, and her vivacity.—Gently squeezed between her arms, could

I still think of plunging into an eternal sleep? My blood boiled already with a desire quite contrary to that of destruction, and the fever of despair turned entirely to the profit of love.

Every one knows in what a shocking state the chief article of furniture is generally found at those country inns. Now who will take the trouble of apologising for the Countess and the Chevalier, qu'un même desir entraîna sur le grabat le plus misérable. I might observe, for the justification of them both, that those which Morpheus prefers, are not the most agreeable to Venus: this once, however, I shall pass condemnation respecting a fact which I would have kept secret, if the concatenation of events had not compelled me to relate it. I shall therefore confess, that in the present instance, both the sacrificator and the victim were equally guilty of blameable precipitance; that the latter with too great irreverence was immolated au pied d'un autel qui n'avait pas même de rideaux; I shall own especially, that prior to commencing the ceremony of the grand sacrifice, Faublas ought at least to have shut the gates of the temple against profane intruders.

We were worshipping the deity whose fires consumed us, when we were disturbed in our devotions. The room door was opened on a sudden, and some one precipitately entered the place. A voice which was expressive of mingled surprise and pain, a voice which I thought I recollected, let immediately escape this very single exclamation: Good God! what do I see? Alas! for my part I could no longer see anything; I had not even strength enough to move and try to look at the intruder. Whether the plaintive accents of that voice, still dear to me, had produced over my whole frame so sudden a revolution, or rather whether nature finally exhausted by so many extraordinary fatigues, accumulated within so few days, was now too weak to support the last efforts; I dropped senseless into the arms of the Countess, who, plunged into a swoon of a most desirable kind, was unable to assist me.

I recovered my spirits upon hearing the jolting of a berlin. A favourable moonlight afforded me the opportunity of viewing, in all its details, the situation I was in. To speak the truth it appeared to me sweeter than I felt my illness to be painful. My man's clothes had

been taken off, and my female attire put on again; I was almost extended at full length in the carriage, on the back seat. On the same side in the right corner, Madame de Lignolle, who had scarcely elbow room, supported most of my body, truly become a burden; my weary head rested on her bosom; with both her hands she covered my frozen forehead; over my face, which was kept warm with hers, were poured tears and kisses; the vivifying breath of a lover, reanimated the uncertain breath of my life nearly extinct.

Facing both of us, on the front seat, almost in the left corner, a youth, whose charming countenance, exhibited certain symptoms of a great alteration, supported my legs on his knees, and by means of stooping a little, gently leaned upon mine. He was endeavouring to warm my hands, that were watered with his tears, by holding them within his. He seemed to undergo with uncommon fortitude, the most fatiguing posture. He was waiting with inquietude, though not impatiently, the moment when his friend, opening his eyes at last, would repay his attention with a look.

Good evening, my Eleanor! and you, Ma——

(I stopped)—my friend, dear Vicomte, generous Florville! How are you this evening?

They both answered me by their caresses, by their sobs, by the moving expression of their alarms, and of their hopes.—Vicomte, I have not been mistaken, then? It was you who surprised us?—It was! interrupted she, with a sigh.—Truly, I am quite ashamed, said Madame de Lignolle: Most luckily, the gentlemen knew nearly—but it signifies not! What a difference! Sir, I conjure you do not mention it to anyone, not to the Marchioness de B—especially—I beseech you, for you would mortify me to death!

He replied, in a tone of great feeling: You may rely, Madame la Comtesse, upon the most inviolable discretion.—It is this young gentleman, resumed Madame de Lignolle, who yielded you assistance first; it is he also who has taken the trouble of dressing you, for common decency would not allow me.—Sir! he is laughing, interrupted the Vicomte.—Ah, so much the better, said the Countess, with an exclamation of joy, most likely he suffers less. I truly admire him; his liveliness never forsakes him; Faublas is



always laughing; sometimes he weeps too! My lover knows how to weep!

The Vicomte was satisfied with saying: I know well he does!

After a moment's reflection, Madame de Lignolle embraced me tenderly.—Sir, said she to me, you laugh at your mistress speaking of decency after having been surprised in your arms, and yet I am right. Could a female dress you when still in a state of confusion, in an inn, and before a number of spectators, whom your accident had brought upstairs? The Vicomte, by taking that care upon himself, has rendered me essential service, he has helped us both at the same time. Thanks to him, no stranger has witnessed the disorder I was in, and the troublesome visitors speedily retreated. You were dressed from head to foot in the twinkling of an eye. It is impossible to find a more complaisant, more attentive friend: or a dressing-maid more expeditious, or more clever. Indeed, Vicomte, you possess, in the most supreme degree, the art of assisting and of dressing women. But, my dear, admire his foresight! Hoping to meet us together, he had

brought with him the clothes you now have on.

I was listening with a secret pleasure to the Countess praising the Marchioness. Dear Vicomte, you are, in fact, the most generous, and the most attentive friend. How shall I express my gratitude?—Take care of yourself, do not speak, keep from all manner of agitation, answered he.—Did my servant meet you at that inn?—No.—What! are my father and sister to see me come without previous notice?—Hold your tongue; I know they are at Nemours; we shall send them word to-morrow morning.—To-morrow! Where are you taking me, then?

I am ignorant of the answer that was made; I had a relapse of my lethargy, which was agitated by horrid dreams, and lasted longer than the first attack; when I awoke, it was broad day-light, and I felt very weak.

I recollected the chateau in Gatinois, the apartment of Madame de Lignolle, her bed—that charming bed, in which Eleanor's lover had lately passed two nights with her. There it was that Mademoiselle de Brumont now laid languishing in bodily pain, and mental sorrow. On his right side, Florville, in deep despair,

was sobbing, and kneeling by the side of the bed; she held a handkerchief over my eyes; her hands were extended towards me, and her head reclining on my bolster. I beheld, on my left, an object no less deserving of my compassion; this was my Eleanor; her hair was dishevelled, her eyes half dead, lifted up towards heaven, she looked extremely pale; it was my Eleanor, who, rather stretched than seated on the bed, sobbed as she said: The cruel man, if he spoke of his wife, only! but he wishes for my most detested rival! he unceasingly calls after that Madame de B—, whose name I cannot bear; he calls to her as often as he does his Eleanor! Alas! I thought I had to put up only with his love for Sophia; I did not imagine he bore a true attachment to the Marchioness! How does he manage to love so many at a time? I can only adore one man! I can idolise him alone! What female could I have to dread, if the ingrate would repay my love with a proportionate affection?

The Vicomte, entirely awakened from the state of torpor in which I had seen him plunged, replied: Why, but, madam, you have him now under your own roof. You already have, over

those you term your rivals, the advantage of being a mother; and ere long you will have the greater advantage still of having saved his life. Are you not happy to have him in your house?—I am, exclaimed she, with a transport of self-gratification: I shall save his life, that his wife had exposed, that the Marchioness would have curtailed. It will be my happy lot, perhaps, to prolong and to embellish his existence. To me it will be consecrated, for it will be my property. Yes, let me save his life; let me use this new mode of making myself beloved, since all others prove insufficient; let me fasten, with this new knot, the bonds that unite us already; let gratitude coalesce with love in the heart of my friend, to secure to me a preference which I have merited. I must save him; but it will be in my power;—if his illness was continually to make new progress!—if his fever was to redouble!—if, as just now, in the excess of a transport of rage, he offered to jump out of bed, to leave this apartment, to run after Sophia, whom he imagines he can see, to Madame de B— whom he thinks he can hear! By what means can I expect to quiet him, when I myself am so disabled? So laborious a

night! a night partly spent in the liveliest alarms! I feel quite exhausted!—You, *Vi-comte*, are stronger than I am, and possessed of more presence of mind; yet you look quite overpowered. Alas! are both his friend and his lover out of spirits?—Oh, my God! supply, us with fresh powers!—But I am imploring you in behalf of a passion which you condemn! Which you condemn? Ah, you are unjust! Look within my heart, and judge!—judge!—have mercy on a weak mortal! If, however, my prayers should not be heard!—if *Faublas* should breathe his last! If he should! I shall not have to reproach myself with his death; it will be his wife—no, his unworthy mistress, the *Marchioness de B—*! The remembrance of *Sophia* occasions him, in fact, lively agitations; but I can see very plainly it is the recollection of *Madame de B—* that pursues, torments, and inflames him. She is the one who makes his blood boil! who kills him! If *Faublas* should die, I will go to that wicked woman: Your inordinate passion, I shall say to her, has destroyed the most perfect object that heaven ever created;—your artificial rage has deprived me of the mortal whom I idolised;—

take this! receive the merited prize of your villainies! This said, I shall kill her; I next shall go to the tomb of my lover—I shall go!—No longer shall I weep!—I shall plunge a poniard into my poor heart!

Thus would Madame de Lignolle, in her grief, apprise me of my dangerous situation. What I mistook for a lethargy, were the slumbers attending my fever; what I called dreams was a real delirium.

I felt extremely tired; and, in order to procure some relief, by changing my posture, I tried whether I could not sit up in my bed. My two nurses, seeing me move, caught hold of both my arms, and uniting their efforts, kept me in the position which incommoded me so much.

Wherefore do you wish to leave your friend? said the Marchioness.—Stay there, cried out the Countess: stay there! do you hear me?—Eleanor, my beloved, I do not want to go away; make yourself easy.—Ah, said she, embracing me, so then you know me again. Stay there, I beg of you; do, I shall take great care of you; do, you will be supplied with all that you may want.—I addressed Madame de B—: And you, too, my dear beloved; keep up your spirits.—

His delirium is not yet over! interrupted Madame de Lignolle.—Quite the reverse, resumed the Marchioness, I believe he is perfectly recovered. He addresses the Vicomte, and yet it is to the Countess that he is always speaking! He looks at me, to be sure, and sees you all the while! What have you then to complain of!—My dear Florville, what o'clock is it?—Twelve.—Twelve? Countess, have you sent word to my father? Have you sent to enquire after my sister?—My messenger ought to be back, answered she.

At that same moment we heard a noise in the passage: it was la Fleur, just returning from Nemours. The Countess ran to open the door of her apartment for him, and shut it again as soon as he had got in.

He had seen M. de Belcour: my sister was much better; my father was to come in the evening to pay a visit to the Countess.—Very well, la Fleur, said she, but speak the truth: Did Julien set off immediately after I had ordered him to take his horse, and inform M. de Lignolle in Paris, of our arrival here. Before two in the morning he did, madam.—Very well, my man, leave us; hark, la Fleur, take this

money, and hold your tongue. Send up, directly, M. de Despeisses, who must be downstairs.

This M. Despeisses was not long coming. He felt my pulse, looked at my eyes, desired me to put out my tongue, and with the greatest assurance declared there was not the least appearance of danger. He only added that his patient wanted rest. The Countess, in the first transport of her joy, jumped at the doctor's neck, kissed, and immediately dismissed him.

For some minutes Madame de B— had appeared involved in most serious thought. She at length, however, spoke, in order to give Madame de Lignolle an advice, not altogether disinterested. Most fortunately, said she, there is no further occasion for us both staying with the Chevalier. Would it not be advisable for you, Madame la Comtesse, to go and lie down, without taking off your clothes, on the tent bed, in the adjacent closet?—But yourself, sir—I am in no hurry, replied the Vicomte; I am not by far so worn out with fatigue as you appear to be; besides I shall have plenty of time in the afternoon. You, madam, will have the Baron's visit to receive.—The Countess de-



clared she would not leave me; and I believe that the solicitations of the Marchioness would have proved of no avail, had I not, in support of them, urged my pressing entreaties; and, even then, Madame de Lignolle, before she complied, exacted from us a promise, not to let her sleep above two hours.

After we had kept silent and quiet for some moments the Vicomte left me without making the least noise, walked tiptoe several times round the apartment, looked, I know not under what pretence, through the window of the closet, in which the Countess had retired, and then, resuming her accustomed seat at the head of my bed, said to me, in a whisper: She is fast asleep. She then added, with an air of inquietude: Chevalier, I have a thousand things to say to you: but beware of interrupting me, do not grow uneasy, only listen to me.

Here Madame de B—, collecting herself a little, seized one of my hands, which she held between hers; and cast a tender look at me.

She at length began to speak to the following purpose: See whether I am not entitled to accuse destiny! I, whom for the last six months have been, and am now forever condemned to

repentance, indifference and regret, could see but one consolation within my reach, namely, that of contributing to your felicity, have recently become the author of all your miseries. I would willingly sacrifice for my friend, what I hold dearest, and it is through me that he has lost what he cherished most! Am I miserable enough? For a long time past you must have ceased loving me, Faublas; in future you are going to abominate me.—I cease to love you!—Don't speak so loud, interrupted she, or rather do not speak at all. Don't offer to speak, my good friend, it hurts you. Faublas, repeated she, you are going to hate me; and as she perceived I was ready to interrupt her again, she hastened to add: but no, no, it would be too unjust. Faublas, since you do not wish to find me reprehensible or guilty, re-say to yourself for my justification, what I said to you in the forest de Compiègne. Ah! your friend must own it, in order that she may feel less unhappy, she deems it essential that you retain no resentment against her.—Oh, you, who are ever dear to me, believe me, I only retain the remembrance of an incomparable generosity, of an unparalleled delicacy, and, shall I speak it?

of a—the Marchioness, who probably was afraid of hearing me utter the word, interrupted me bluntly: of a friendship which will last as long as I live. I understand you well; but don't speak, Faublas; dread all manner of agitation. Suffer me to speak alone; allow me to let you know how busily engaged I have been, for your interest I thought, since our separation in the forest.

Tormented by the apprehension of not being able to prevent the cruel event which I dreaded, I hastened to arrive soon enough, that I might offer you all the assistance a friend could bestow.

She then added, in a tone of great sadness: it is true that I was taking a useless trouble; love already afforded you consolation: a more cherished woman——More cherished! you could not vouch for that, for, indeed, I know not what to think of it myself.—What? answered she, pretending to misunderstand my meaning, you don't love Madame de Lignolle as much as you do Sophia?—As much as I do Sophia? No, undoubtedly. Neither Madame de Lignolle, nor—

I believe I was going to say, nor Madame de B—, she prevented me.

But, sir, don't speak so loud! Must I tell you so a hundred times? Faublas, you will awaken the Countess, you will do yourself injury, my friend! I have forgot what I was saying to you.—That you had hastened to come in order to offer me consolation.—To console you! I did not say that! to assist you, Chevalier. In fact, as soon as Madame de Lignolle had taken you away, as soon as Rosambert—*Apropos*, what is become of him?—I had him conveyed to Compiègne, to the house of a friend I have there—of one of your friends?—Yes, of my friends. The surgeon spoke of venturing the journey to Paris, but I opposed the Count being exposed to the fatigue of such a long travelling, neither would I suffer his being taken to an inn; perhaps he would not have been attended properly, and in his present situation, the want of due attention might have cost him his life. The traitor deserves to die, but the death-blow I am to strike; I shall not trust to the common accident of life for the care of chastising him; that concerns me alone. What I wish for most—But hear me: are you

not afraid of the consequences? Can you rely upon the discretion of so many people?—Do, my good friend, hold your tongue, you tire yourself, I have used the common means, which are no bad ones; I have magnificently purchased secrecy: promises and threats have been lavished at the same time as gold.—Those precautions are not always sufficient—Silence—I have taken others, pursued she, with an air of embarrassment, and that is the reason why I returned to Paris, where I lost a few hours, but as soon as I was at liberty again, I flew towards Fromonville, where I thought of arriving before you, as you were to stop that night at the Countess's. Half way I met one of my emissaries who was going to Paris to apprise me of what his companions had discovered at Montcour. He had attentively examined all the travellers he had met on the road. From the intelligence he brought me, I was informed, not without some surprise, that you were far before me, and that Madame de Lignolle was also several stages in advance of me. Upon hearing this piece of news, I made double haste, and would have reached Montargis before the Countess, only I could procure no horses at

Pui-la-Lande. Oh! yes, but she arrived first; and even, *apropos* of that circumstance I must return you many thanks, and beg your pardon especially; you found us—how came I to neglect shutting the door? How—Chevalier, have the goodness to spare me the particular details; and believe me; let us have nothing more to say about the adventure—Permit me, however—I will not permit anything; you will not speak one word more upon that subject, if you retain for me the least——

The Marchioness stopped a moment, to find out the proper expression she was to use. It was the word esteem, which she pronounced first; that of respect she only hazarded afterwards, in a trembling voice, and with almost an air of humility.

Yes, I entertain for you great esteem, high respect, much—friendship—I understand you, say no more.—Faublas, I am fully rewarded; the certainty of your complete recovery is the only thing respecting which I want to be made easy in my mind. You have been speaking a great deal too much, take some rest; try to sleep, if it were only for a quarter of an hour, I beg of you, I insist upon it.

Although she had not ordered me, I should have soon been forced to ask her leave to do so. But my painful slumbers did not last long. I awoke so soon and so suddenly, that the Marchioness was quite disconcerted: I surprised her shedding tears over a paper which she hurried to conceal from my sight.—I took the liberty of asking her: What is this fatal piece of writing which occasions your tears thus to flow?—Alas! wherefore should I tell you? answered she with a sigh.—Undoubtedly, returned I with some bitterness, the time is past when you kept no secrets from your friend.—Secrets from you? if I had, I should have but one, and that, Faublas, you might guess without much trouble; but that, through commiseration as well as through delicacy, you should help me to keep.—Commiseration! what a word!—It is the proper one. My sorrows—I will endeavour to comfort you.—But if now, exclaimed she in a fit of despair, if now, more than ever, I am not to be comforted! Let me conjure you, my good friend, not to put any more questions unto me; ask me nothing more; leave me to bewail my troubles by myself: complaints and tears are my last resource! and yet I had thought myself

capable of bearing patiently the hard trials reserved for the most unhappy of women, the most unfortunate of all women! I was proud enough to think I was forever secure against the injustice of men, and adverse fortune! How silly I was! On this day at least my sad experience has convinced me of a truth that I had always suspected, and which consoles my weakness: that that courage of which men are so proud, is the most easy and common. It is easy when prompted either by a spirit of revenge or glory, to expose one's life for a moment; it is not so to endure, with an equal perseverance, several unexpected misfortunes. Many other reverses greater still, equally unforeseen, and as undeserved, had not entirely overpowered me; wherefore does this present one crush me beyond recovery? I cannot account for it, but my heart is oppressed by an enormous weight; if I obtain not a speedy relief it will be all over with me, I shall be totally undone, let me weep, my dear friend, allow me to sob and groan.

I wished to speak; but to hinder me she stopped my mouth with her hand. I caught hold of that sweet and pretty hand, I squeezed



it, I kissed it, I placed it on my heart, greatly agitated.

One would have thought that Madame de Lignolle had been waiting for this moment: she rushed out on a sudden from the closet in which I imagined she was fast asleep. The first thing I did was to push the Marchioness away from me. She forever wonderful upon pressing occasions, preserved more presence of mind than I did! Persuaded that it was too late, she would neither withdraw her hand, nor change her place.—You would have suffered me to sleep till to-morrow, said the Countess. Then looking at the Vicomte, she added: What is the matter?—A palpitation, answered he coolly.—A palpitation! But you weep! is a palpitation dangerous, then?—Not so in general; but in his present state every agitation may be attended with bad consequences.—The Countess then addressing me: Do you feel worse, my dearest?—Quite on the contrary, I feel better.—Because you see me?—Because I see her who is dear to me, her to whom I have caused too great sorrow, her whose inquiet tenderness watches to prolong my days.—You have said enough, interrupted Madame de B—, who

squeezed my hand; she understands you; she is repaid for her attention.—I understand him, undoubtedly, exclaimed the Countess, embracing me; but never mind, let him go on, he speaks so well.

Notwithstanding the Countess manifested a desire to hear me talk, I remained silent. What could I have said more? I had just explained myself in such a manner as to please every one present.

This satisfaction, however, did not last long, on account of M. de Lignolle arriving much sooner than he was expected. Julien, who was dispatched after him, had met him on the road. He enquired after me with eager interest; but the air with which he looked at the Marchioness rather alarmed me. This gentleman, said the Countess, is an intimate friend of Mademoiselle de Brumont. The Count, nevertheless, appeared equally uneasy and surprised: A friend! repeated he. The Marchioness immediately said: We have been friends from an early age.—I suppose, sir, you are a nobleman?—I am a Vicomte—Vicomte of—Florville.—That is a new name to me.—Can all names be known?—I don't wish to boast, but there are very few

unknown to me. He then took a seat; and casting a contemptuous look upon the Marchioness, added: Your family most probably is not very ancient?—My great grandfather's grandfather was admitted into the king's carriage.—Ah! ah! sir, I am your most humble servant. He rose from his seat, and advanced to pay his compliments. You seem to be very young.—I am not of age; nothing near it.—The day will come.—How came we to have the good fortune of the gentleman paying us a visit here in the country: asked he of his wife.—How? why—but it would happen that—good fortune would have it, that—The Vicomte seeing the Countess so perplexed, said: Shall I tell how?—Do, pray.—Madame de B— then began thus: For a long time Mademoiselle had given me the hope of seeing her come and dine with me at my house. She hitherto had deferred being as good as her word, because she must have taken a pretty long ride.—Where do you live, then?—At Fontainebleau. I spend eight months out of the twelve there; as I have an apartment in the king's palace. M. de Lignolle bowed to her.

I heard the Marchioness with as much pleasure as surprise. Was it the same woman who,

but a moment before, lamenting some new misfortune, appeared to strive in vain to suppress her groans, stifle her sobs, and resist her despair, I now saw, but a moment after, with an admirable *sang froid*, plays her tricks upon the Countess? Was it her whom I likewise now heard, with a steady voice, a tranquil countenance, and a tone of truth, telling M. de Lignolle an extempore, ingenious, and probable story? Oh! Madame de B—, how well you know, according to circumstances, how to compose your face, dry up your tears, dissemble your passions; in short, how to have a proper command over yourself! Oh! to what a degree have you, within a moment, justified and increased the high opinion I entertained of your abilities?

She proceeded as follows: Mademoiselle, however, came yesterday.—Ah! exclaimed the Count, addressing me, that was the indispensable business which forced you to be gone for a whole day! It was for a party of pleasure that you left the Countess, who was confined to her bed, and seriously indisposed! Were I in her place, I never would forgive you.—The Marchioness resumed: She came, and, to make me more happy still, she brought the

Countess with her.—What! said M. de Lignolle to his wife, have you dined at the house of a young gentleman who was an entire stranger to you, and from whom you had not even any invitation?—A truce to your morality if you please, sir, and hear the story to the end.—You may easily conceive how delighted I was at seeing the ladies. Alas! my joy was of no long duration. Mademoiselle felt ill in the afternoon. We thought at first it would be nothing; but she grew worse in the evening. We were at that time very much embarrassed, as you may well imagine; for there was no possibility of a young lady who was ill, continuing under the roof of a bachelor. Most fortunately, Madame la Comtesse, who is possessed of great presence of mind—much less than yourself, Vicomte, I must do you justice—determined upon having Mademoiselle brought here, where she had the goodness to allow me to accompany her.—Wherefore here sooner than to Paris? said the Count to Madame de Lignolle.—Wherefore? Why, faith, ask the Vicomte.—He replied immediately, because it would have been a journey of fourteen long leagues, whereas from Fontainebleau to this place is only seven.

The Count, who found that was no bad reason, remained silent for a while: he seemed to observe with particular attention M. de Florville and Mademoiselle de Brumont? he at last said:—Since you are a friend of Mademoiselle, you must understand guessing charades?—I do, sir, replied the Marchioness, but not at present, if you please; I do not feel in the least disposed.

This answer M. de Lignolle would take it in his head, threw a new light upon the business; he drew the Countess aside; but we listened attentively, anxious to know what he had to say.

Madame, that young man is not the friend of your demoiselle de compagnie. What will you have him be then?—He is her lover, madam.—That is an excellent idea of yours!—Don't laugh, madam, you know I am a connoisseur.—I know you pretend to be one.—I believe it is proper to keep a watchful eye over Mademoiselle de Brumont.—Do you say so, sir?—She should be watched close.—I intend as much.—That Vicomte is young, he has a pretty face; he does not seem to want wit, nor manners: I can read something of a high rank in his countenance and deportment, I must have seen

him somewhere; he has all the look of a seducer, madam.—I admire, sir, the sagaciousness with which you can read through people at one glance.—That is the result of being acquainted with the human heart, Countess! I am afraid little Brumont has already been made the dupe of that young man.—Don't you tell me such a thing! What became of her the day before yesterday?—She spent the whole day at her father's.—Are you sure of that?—I am.—But yesterday, that dinner in the country? that looks very much like a private secret appointment.—I don't understand what you mean by a private secret appointment, sir.—A private secret appointment is—a secret appointment, is—it was a private secret appointment; believe me.—But once more, be explicit.—I am: a private secret appointment is the meeting of two persons—We were three, though—I am thoroughly persuaded, that in consequence, they were provokingly deranged.—Have I acted wrong?—You ought to have consulted me.—Well, go on, sir.—I have many proofs already, of that young man's inclination towards that young girl.—Come, out with them, quick,—His eyes are red, because he has been crying; his eyes

have wept, because his soul was affected; his soul was affected, because his sweetheart has been taken ill; he therefore loves Mademoiselle de Brumont.—Your logic is pressing, sir.—And his soul must be deeply affected, since he would not guess my charades. Don't laugh, madam! this is a serious business: look sharp after your demoiselle de compagnie; either dismiss her at once, or don't lose sight of her for a minute.—Be it so, I prefer not parting with her.—As to that young man, I shall desire him very politely, to take himself home again.—I beg you will not, sir.—But, madam, only consider.—No buts, if you please; I will not—so much the worse for you, Madam; those young folks will play you some foul trick, I tell you so beforehand.

M. de Lignolle left the room rather discontented with his lady, but much pleased with himself. The Countess then returned her best thanks to the Vicomte. You have, said she, most ably extricated me from the extreme trouble I was in; and next to Faublas, you are the most witty and amiable young man in existence.—He answered: lose no time in complimenting me: you are still threatened with impending



danger, which you must think of warding off. The Count is here, the Baron is coming; if they should meet at the same time, they may enter into an explanation, the consequences whereof you must dread.—You are right, but what is to be decided?—Send word to M. de Faublas not to come.—Ah! I shall be glad to see and to speak to him.—I shall, nevertheless, take the liberty of representing to you.—Let me tell you, sir, all your representations are useless: if the Baron had not promised to come, I would send for him.—That being the case, I must find some means then of sending M. de Lignolle away.

She had him called, and said she wished for some game. Delighted at her expressing such a wish, the Count made haste to eat his dinner, and set off to go shooting. The Marchioness, now quite easy in her mind, went to rest on the tent-bed in the closet, the place, which an hour before, was occupied by Madame de Lignolle.

The Countess and I had not been enjoying the pleasure of a tête-à-tête for a quarter of an hour, when we heard a loud rap at the door. Judge of our surprise and apprehensions; it was

M. de Lignolle, already returning. He hallooed out: quick, open the door, I have brought you Madame de Fonrose, yes, Madame de Fonrose, who was coming to see us; I met her as I was getting out of the park. How happy!—

The Countess was going to the door.

A moment, my dear Eleanor, stop a moment, let me tell you, it is Madame de Fonrose! don't speak to her of the Vicomte.—Why not?—Because, my dear, I should have told you of it sooner; but I was so ill, I did not give it a thought. The Baroness and the Vicomte are sworn enemies. It appears that Florville has been making love to her, and although she did not ill-treat him, they quarrelled, and detest each other. You may open the door now; somebody knocks again: above all things, mind what you will be saying; don't speak of the Vicomte.—No, no, make yourself easy.\*

\* I can here relate, verbatim, one of the most singular scenes I ever witnessed, and in which I was a performer: true, indeed, the situation I was in did not allow me to hear all that was said; but such details as had escaped me then, I have heard since, from the very mouth of her whom her imprudence and ill-fate reduced to act the chief part in it.

The COUNT (as he entered).—Where is the Vicomte?

The COUNTESS.—Hush!

The COUNT.—What do you mean?

The COUNTESS.—Hold your tongue!

The BARONESS (looking at Madame de Lignolle with an air of surprise).—Do I interrupt you, Countess?

The COUNTESS.—Not in the least.

The BARONESS (to Faublas).—Well, how is this dear child?

The COUNT.—It is nothing, I tell you; a little fever.

FAUBLAS.—I have dared to flatter myself that my father——

The COUNT.—Your father is a very strange man, mademoiselle!

FAUBLAS.—How say you, sir?

The COUNT.—How! he descries me from a distance! on a sudden he gets out of his carriage, and runs across the fields as if he had seen the devil; that I call being savage to a degree!

The BARONESS.—We have already been telling you a hundred times that M. de Belcour had secret business.

The COUNT.—What! upon my estate?

The BARONESS.—No, but in the neighbourhood.

The COUNT.—Ah! at M. de Florville's, perhaps?

The COUNTESS.—Why don't you hold your tongue?

FAUBLAS (with great warmth, to the Baroness, who stood gazing at Madame de Lignolle).—How comes Madame la Baronne to be in this part of the country?

The BARONESS.—A messenger was despatched last night to let me know that your father was in great want of my immediate services.

FAUBLAS.—To be sure; is my dear Adelaide better?

The BARONESS.—Much better.

The COUNTESS (to Faublas).—Don't speak too much, take care of yourself.

The BARONESS.—What an alteration in one night!

The COUNT.—One night? say several, madam; for believe me, the origin of this illness is of no recent date. Those two ladies, during their first coming to these parts, thought only of amusement, and God knows how they have enjoyed themselves, all day long running about the

park; returning, out of breath, to go and begin over again! Madam, they would play like two children, and fight like two school-boys; and at night—oh! it was quite another thing in the night.

The COUNTESS (laughing).—Do you think, sir, you are telling anything new to the Baroness?

The COUNT.—At night, their beds were in the same room, and, would you believe it? instead of sleeping, they were forever whispering. They did nothing but chat. What I am going to say, madam, is exact to the letter; they did nothing else but chat; I could hear them very plain—because, you see, there was only this thin partition between us. Now every rational being may conceive that, going through a deal of exercise in the day-time, and to undergo a deal of fatigue in the night, is enough to kill one. The Countess, on her return to Paris, found herself very ill in consequence; she was afflicted with the sick-headache, and has been sick, too.

The BARONESS.—You have been sick, Countess?

The COUNTESS.—Poh! that's nothing.

The BARONESS.—Take care, though.

The COUNT (delighted).—Is it not true that she must take care of herself? Mademoiselle, who enjoys a stronger constitution, has stood it longer; and, perhaps, if she had rested herself at our house, instead of going to that Vicomte de Florville's——

The COUNTESS.—Hold your tongue, I tell you!

FAUBLAS (with great warmth, to the Baroness, who still looked amazed).—Madame la Baronne!

The BARONESS.—Well! what's the matter?

FAUBLAS.—A secret! (speaking very low) you have passed through Nemours?

The BARONESS (speaking low).—There it was that I found your father. I left my waiting-woman with Adelaide.

The COUNT.—Yes, I think that if he had not dined at the Vicomte's——

The COUNTESS.—He will not hold his tongue!

The BARONESS.—I understand. These ladies did not wish to let me into the secret. I must, then, inform them that I knew of it. I know that they dined yesterday at Fontainebleau; the Count had told me of it.

FAUBLAS (with a sign of intelligence to the

Baroness).—Madame la Baronne knows the Vicomte ?

The BARONESS (with a cunning look).—Do I ? What a question you are asking me ! He is a very fine fellow, has an elegant deportment, wit——

The COUNTESS (in a whisper to Faublas).—Methinks she does not speak ill of him.

FAUBLAS (in a low voice).—Mere dissimulation ; wait a moment.

The BARONESS.—The grandfather of his great-grandfather has mounted in the king's coach.

The COUNTESS (low).—You are right. I believe she speaks ironically.

FAUBLAS (low).—Undoubtedly she does.

The BARONESS.—Notwithstanding, I know a great defect in him.

The COUNTESS.—Ah !

The COUNT.—What is it ?

The BARONESS.—At least, I have my authority : the Count has just told me the poor young man knows not much about charades.

The COUNTESS (with bursts of laughter).—That is the reason, perhaps, why you are angry with him ?

The BARONESS (looking at the Countess and the Chevalier).—Am I angry with him?

FAUBLAS (with a sign of understanding).—Certainly, you have quarrelled; would you wish to keep it a profound secret?

The BARONESS (cunningly).—Be it so! We had quarrelled, I confess; but, indeed, he has used me very ill.

FAUBLAS (low, to the Countess).—You see! (Aloud, to the Baroness).—I did not wish his being mentioned to you, but since the Count——

The BARONESS.—Yes, we have ceased being friends, (to the Count, after a moment's reflection), and, candidly speaking, that is what prevented my accompanying the ladies, for they had asked me.

FAUBLAS (low to the Baroness).—Mighty well!

The COUNTESS (low to the same). Very clever; I return you thanks.

The COUNT (pacing the room, to the Baroness).—These ladies——these ladies would have acted very right, if they had followed your example (to the Countess); but where is that gentleman?



The COUNTESS.—He is asleep.

The COUNT (looking through the closet window.)—Truly, there he is on the tent-bed, with his clothes on.

The BARONESS.—Shall I not see him?

The COUNT.—If you wish to see him, go in.

FAUBLAS (with impetuosity).—Don't go in! he is overtired, and wants rest.

The BARONESS (wondering).—My gracious! how fiery, mademoiselle! you will do yourself injury.

FAUBLAS (apparently composed).—What an idea! to go and disturb a youth who has been up all night?

The BARONESS (observing the Chevalier).—Is it impossible to go near him without making a noise, and, at the same time, grieving you?

FAUBLAS (in a faltering voice).—I am out of the question; but, if you should awake him; if——

The BARONESS.—If I awake him, he will go to sleep again: there will be no great harm done.

FAUBLAS (much embarrassed).—No great harm! No great harm! I say there would be a great harm done.

The BARONESS.—You may say what you please, mademoiselle; I am very curious to see your intimate friend, whom you are so apprehensive of my disturbing. (She rises.)

The COUNTESS (with a cunning air).—To what purpose? you know him very well.

The BARONESS.—I wish to see whether he is much altered since I saw him last. (She draws near the closet).

FAUBLAS.—Stop her.

The COUNTESS (low).—Why, perhaps she loves him still; she wishes to have the pleasure, at least, of looking at him; what should prevent her?

FAUBLAS.—Don't you know the Baroness? She will make such a bustle.

The COUNTESS.—What then? Wait a bit, I am going to speak to her. (She runs to Madame de Fonrose.) Go in, look at him, if you like, but don't awake him, for he must be tired.

I leave you to judge of my situation; I had not one single reasonable objection to urge, and my weakness kept me in bed; I laid upon thorns; the Baroness was already near the glass door, and I could scarcely conceal my extreme inquietude. What a fortunate obstacle com-

poses me on a sudden! I perceived the Vicomte had locked the door of the closet. The Marchioness, therefore, was safe! No, alas! no, that precaution will not save her; Madame de Lignolle has just given her key to Madame de Fonrose.

As soon as the Baroness had got in, I heard the following words: Yes, that is a pretty face enough, but it is exactly the one I know. No—yes—not at all! but is it—that it is—the very one. I durst hardly to suspect as much. The adventure appeared to me too incredible.—Awake, charming young man! come, Monsieur le Vicomte! come and join the company: come, come then, I shall lend you my hand.

It was her arm, however, which Madame de B— seized as a support, for she was so sleepy as to be unable to stand.

Whoever, only once in his life has been awakened suddenly from a profound sleep, knows well what I have so imperfectly described. One cannot pass suddenly from that state of death to a state of life: the eyes at first open, but they continue obscured by a thick cloud: the ears do hear, but catch only the minutest parts of the words that are conveyed to them, and of which

they alter the nature; it is especially in the brain that the confusion is extreme. They happen to be at the same time loaded with recent ideas, the remnants of an interrupted dream, and ideas often contrary to the former, and which are transmitted by a loquacious intruder. From this unforeseen shock the inevitable result is a total confusion.

It is in that excess of disorder that we look without seeing, that we listen without comprehending, that we speak without thinking; but, expect not that I shall explain what mechanical instinct causes to move a body without a soul.

Such did Madame de B— appear when supported, or rather dragged, by Madame de Fonrose, she entered the room in which we were.

END OF VOL. III.



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